

The Arkham Sampler

Winter 1948

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MESSRS. TURKES AND TALBOT

by H. RUSSELL WAKEFIELD

When young Bob Fanning was asked by his affluent parent which profession he would like to adopt on coming down from Oxford he replied, "Publishing." It must be confessed that by so doing he revealed neither originality nor commercial acumen; for the undergraduate of culture, refinement, horn-rimmed spectacles and dark blue shirts and collars, almost invariably hankers after that onerous and unremunerative career. He fancies that his working day will be spent in discovering best-selling masterpieces and lunching with such persons as Mr. Wells and Mrs. Galsworthy, and in discussing deep literary stuff. The dreary truth is, that Aunt Sally of the book business, the publisher, spends most of his time yawning over typed garbage, and in trying to make a farthing do the work of a halfpenny. However, this is not a thesis on that sad trade. Young Bob, though he wore horn-rimmed spectacles, had very good eyes, or rather an "eye" behind them, and played four games creditably well. In consequence, he missed his "first" in English Literature, which by no means distressed his sire, who had the healthy-minded merchant's distrust of scholarship. He mistrusted publishing also, but young Bob's tennis "blue" gratified him, and he consented to allow his son to adopt this dubious and little-esteemed mode of money-making. So he set about it. He lunched at the club fairly often with a director of one of the few quite solvent publishing houses in Great Britain, and he asked for his advice.

"I believe Turkes, of Turkes & Talbot, has an opening for a pupil," he replied. "He hasn't a very big business, but he's clever and knows his job inside out, which hardly any of us do. I've pinched five authors from him and they've all sold well. He found 'em, I've made 'em, and that's the way of the world. He'd love to shoot me at any dawn, so don't mention my name. Just write to him and say Bob wants to learn publishing, and has he any opening for a pupil."

"Thanks very much, Joe, I will," replied old Bob, and he did as he was bid.

By return of post a reply came, suggesting that Mr. Fanning and his son should come to see Mr. Turkes at his office in Great Lewisham Street, Bloomsbury, between three and five the next day. The two Bobs turned up at three-thirty. Number 43 Great Lewisham Street is a four-storey building built about the beginning of the last century. While they were being conducted up the stairs by an office boy, Bob thought how dark and thin the house seemed to be. The staircase was narrow and twisty and steep and, it being a sombre October afternoon, the lights were already on. But there were suggestions of parsimony in their number and candlepower. A bit gloomy, thought young Bob. As Mr. Turkes had his room on the top floor, they were panting a bit when they reached it. The office boy knocked, opened the door, and they entered. Mr. Turkes rose from his chair at a thickly populated desk and greeted them effusively.

Young Bob's first impression of the publisher was uncertain. He was too young to be much of a judge of character and Mr. Turkes was no easy object for analysis. He was almost tiny and physically meagre, and his dark suit looked its considerable age, though it was trim and well kept. Also he wore a collar about an inch and a quarter high, vaguely clerical, a neck-wear species almost extinct. He looked about fifty-five and his face was not unprepossessing, though Bob noticed it was slightly asymmetrical, one eye being placed a little higher in the head than the other. Those eyes were black and piercing and, in a way, belied the extreme cordiality of his manner. He wore a short naval beard on a powerful chin. His hair was thick and without a grey one. Bob thought he looked, in general, a bit "weird," and, in fact, his face was sharply inconsistent. He stated he would be delighted to train young Mr. Fanning for a period of nine months at a fee of one hundred and fifty guineas.

"And after that?" asked Bob's practical parent.

"Well," replied the publisher, "if, as I have no doubt will be the case, he seems well fitted for my trade, I shall be glad to have him as my partner, provided, of course, he takes a financial interest in the business."

"What exactly does that mean?" asked Fanning Senior.

"Oh, possibly a few thousand pounds, but these are early days to go into details. Whatever his investment might be, he would receive, of course, a relative share of the profits. I may say my business is prospering; during the last three years my

turnover has increased over sixteen per cent, but quite frankly I could do with more capital. I am taking few risks, but *building up*; by that I mean buying the type of book which is what we call the 'bread-winner', the book of a steady permanent, rather than a spectacular immediate success. However, before I ask you to put any money into my firm I will put all the facts and figures concerning it frankly and in a detailed way before you. The first thing is to discover if your son shows aptitude and a certain passion for publishing. Without those two tendencies it would be grossly impolitic for him to go into this branch of the book business."

He was almost a bit "oily", thought young Bob; his father summoned him up as a very astute man of affairs. His room, though crammed with miscellaneous and mysterious articles, look-highly systematised—those articles gave the general impression of being in their rightly appointed places. In any case, thought Fanning Senior, a hundred and fifty isn't a fortune, and nine months no fatal spell to waste, even it were wasted, which there was no particular reason to expect.

So, to make a short interview even shorter, the decision was made that young Bob should begin his apprenticeship on the following Monday week, and that a cheque for one hundred and fifty guineas should be in Mr. Turkes' hands before that day.

"Well, what do you think of that bird, Bob?" asked his father as they drove back to Hyde Park Mansions.

"Oh, he seemed all right."

"I'll tell you what I think. He's clever, he wants more capital, and he knows I'm a rich man. And he knows, too, that if I buy you a partnership I'll put up a decent sum. Therefore, he'll do his best to make you useful to him. I don't think I took much of a fancy to him personally, but he impressed me as a very good business man. One day, perhaps, I'll buy him right out. However, we'll see."

So on Monday week at ten o'clock young Bob announced himself at Number 43 and was shown up to Mr. Turkes' room, there to be launched on his career. There is no need to describe in detail the manifold and various things he was set to study and absorb. He had to read many typescripts, chiefly novels, and he had never realized that it was possible for human beings to write so vilely as most of their authors. And there were agreements to be studied, and papers and types and bindings and all

the various details which went to the learning of his trade; and he took to it all like a hungry horse to his nosebag.

Mr. Turkes realized very soon that Bob had inherited much, possibly all, of his father's business *flair* and instinct for figures and that, though he had a respectable literary taste and critical judgement, he had mercifully not enough of either to afflict him with a sense of the futility of it all.

In other words, he was going to be very useful to him.

If Mr. Turkes studied young Bob, the latter, in a diffident way returned the compliment and came to some tentative conclusions concerning him. He instinctively knew he was a master of his art and had a knack of imparting his knowledge to another. However, he was compelled also to face the fact that Mr. Turkes' nerves were sometimes a bit shaky and that he was inclined to be parsimonious. The latter fact was impressed upon him when the publisher entertained him at lunch at a small temperance hotel round the corner, chiefly patronized by the provincial clergy and profoundly unpettable American ladies. His host observed with a disarming smile, that he was a very poor lunch eater, so young Bob politely stated that he, too, was never very hungry in the middle of the day, a tactful but utterly inaccurate remark. However, it seemed to please Mr. Turkes, who ordered two portions of rather remotely originated cold beef and ditto of the sort of vegetables which have always been such very poor propaganda for the British kitchen. Then some bread and mousetrap cheese. In consequence, the bill was easily covered by a ten-shilling note, but that didn't prevent Mr. Turkes from scrutinising it with detective care, while he seemed to be searching his memory to check each of the few and inexpensive items. The waitress got tuppence—and looked it. Young Bob knew enough about people to realize that one very dominating side of Mr. Turkes' character had revealed itself during that three quarters of an hour.

That his nerves were not quite all they should be was impressed on him when he went to his room one evening about five o'clock to ask him a question. He forgot to knock and opened the door rather sharply. As he did so he heard, "Who's that? Who's that?" in a rather horribly anxious tone of voice, and on entering the room he saw Mr. Turkes standing at his desk and gripping it with strained knuckles and looking as if his last hour had come, thought Bob, so staring and tense and bothered he seemed. When

he saw Bob he sank back in his chair and said, "My dear boy, you quite startled me. I'm afraid I was having forty winks; I find royalty accounts the perfect insomnia cure. But I'd rather you'd always knock."

Bob apologised profusely, but found the incident vaguely odd. He had been rather surprised to find that Mr. Turkes has his dwelling place on that small top floor. Besides his workroom there was a tiny bedroom and bathroom and one that was always kept locked. The charwoman looked after him to the extent of making his bed and cleaning up. Bob thought it a beastly uncomfortable way of living and quite unnecessary, for Mr. Turkes was quite nicely off, and had no one to spend his money on but himself. Bob wouldn't have slept there for many sheckels; it was such a sombre, dark, lonely, little top floor, utterly lacking in any kind of cheer, and it couldn't be very good for a person with nerves. His own were staunch enough, but even he felt a bit fidgety sometimes when he stayed late and all the others had gone. For one thing, he often felt mysteriously oppressed for no reason whatsoever. He hadn't a real care in the world and his health was perfect. Yet something seemed to come and sit on his back, as it were, and while, of course, there was no one else in the room he sometimes involuntarily glanced round to make quite sure, and then he swore at himself. Again, there were those sounds from the room above his, the locked one. He had discovered it to be so one day when Mr. Turkes had gone to Manchester, and he guiltily explored the top floor. Those sounds were oddly like footfalls. In fact, he almost found it impossible to argue away the fact that someone was moving about up there, every now and again. One night when they were very distinct he tip-toed up, wondering if Mr. Turkes, who was still working, had caused them. But he heard him cough in his own room, so it wasn't he.

Then one evening he'd come out from his room to go up to consult the publisher about something when he'd seen the back of someone at the top of the stairs ahead of him, and supposing that person had an appointment with Mr. Turkes, he had gone back to his room. A moment later the manager, Mr. Beales, brought him in some papers. "Just glance at these, would you, sir?" he said. "I'm taking them up to Mr. Turkes."

"He's got someone with him," said Bob.

"No, sir."

"But I saw him go up!"

"Well, no one's come in, sir."

"But I saw him. He was very tall and I thought he limped a little."

The manager was silent for a moment, apparently not quite sure what to say, "Oh, well, sir, if that's so I'll wait till he's disengaged." He spoke rather hurriedly. "But perhaps I'll leave it till tomorrow. It's a bit late for him to tackle this stuff to-night."

"Yes, it is," agreed Bob. "And I think I've done enough for today, so I'll be off. Good night."

Just before leaving he went into the clerks' room on the ground floor to look at the day's orders. As he entered, the two clerks had their backs to him and one was vehemently addressing the other, "I *did* see him, I tell you. I could swear to it!"

"Take more water with it," replied the other, and then, becoming aware of Bob's presence, they turned round and looked uncomfortable—the vehement one gave the impression of having experienced a shock of some kind. Bob wondered what it was all about, but the incident left no impression on him.

On one occasion when Mr. Turkes was away for the day and there was a general relaxation of the commercial muscle in the office, a jocund damping of productive fire, young Bob took the opportunity of asking Mr. Beales, that most invaluable of managers, concerning the "Talbot" who helped to supply the title of the firm.

"Well, sir," replied Mr. Beales, "he went abroad suddenly last Guy Fawkes day and never came back again."

"But why did he do that?"

"Well, sir, I believe it was this way," replied the manager in those slightly hushed tones in which the best type of Englishman refers to sexual and matrimonial unpleasantness, "he was a married man and he took a fancy to another lady, and just before he went he told Mr. Turkes he was going away for good with her."

"What was he like?"

"Oh, a genial gentleman, sir, but he had a pretty quick temper. And he didn't do much work; came late, left early, took two hours for lunch and a lot of holidays. But he was a very clever publisher in spite of that; many of our authors were found by him. He had what they call a 'flair', sir."

"Did he hit it off with Mr. Turkes?"

"Oh, I think so, sir."

"And he's gone for good?"

"So he told Mr. Turkes."

"It's a funny thing to do—give up one's job and go abroad for ever. He must have money of his own."

"I suppose so, sir; he was a pretty quick spender, from all accounts."

"And this was his room?"

"Yes, sir."

Bob pondered this information and it made him feel sympathetic towards Mr. Turkes, for it must have been a pretty dirty shock suddenly to have to do the whole of another man's work as well as his own. No wonder he had to swot as he did. No wonder he seemed so nervy. He was a conscientious youth and he determined to fit himself for the job of relieving Mr. Turkes' shoulders as quickly as possible. Yet, though he was already certain he wanted to be a publisher, he frankly confessed to himself that he was not absolutely sure whether the prospect of working with Mr. Turkes for possibly many years was entirely pleasing. He was affable enough, almost too much so for Bob's British horror of effusiveness. He was a clever and hard-working expert at his job and he seemed honest. But, somehow or other, one couldn't really imagine oneself really getting to know him well, nor, in any way, wanting to, Bob candidly decided.

That same evening those footsteps began again and, the coast being clear, Bob resolved to investigate. He went up to the top landing and listened intently outside the locked door, the key-hole of which, he noticed, was plugged up with some dark substance. He could hear nothing, save for one sharp creaking sound which might have been almost anything, he thought. He went downstairs again and tried to read a heavy work on foreign affairs, but he kept on listening for those footsteps again, and once more that sense of depression came to him, and twice he glanced round quickly and cursed his lack of "guts". He was successfully fighting these feelings down when there came from above, beyond any possibility of doubt or dispute, four quick steps. He looked at his watch, decided it was late enough for him to leave with a clear conscience, and did so.

A few days later he invited his chief, somewhat diffidently, to luncheon at a club to which he had just been elected. The

invitation was most gratefully accepted. When they were seated in the dining-room young Bob gave his guest the menu and asked him to choose his own meal. Mr. Turkes examined it with gusto. "As you know, my boy," he said, "I'm not, as a rule, much of a lunch eater, but this morning I feel quite sharp set. Perhaps it's the nip in the air. Let me see, I think a little soup, yes, tomato, would be just the thing and after that . . ." And after that, to young Bob's carefully concealed surprise, he ordered three substantial courses which he gobbled down with celerity and obvious appreciation. Also, he quite eschewed his water-wagon luncheon habits and drank the best part of a bottle of Chablis. It is not quite accurate to say he gobbled down four courses, it should be three and a half, for when he had put away about fifty per cent of a Welsh rarebit, young Bob jokingly referred to the problem of sounds he heard from the ceiling of his room. Mr. Turkes put down his knife and fork, and the rather permanent smile which had remained on his face during the meal seemed to roll up from his chin through his mouth, eyes, forehead, and disappear in his hair. At least, that was the fanciful picture which occurred to young Bob.

"My dear boy," Mr. Turkes said at length, "why didn't you speak of it before? I hope it hasn't been a nuisance to you. That room above yours is full of a lot of old rubbish I've accumulated, and probably there are rats—or there may be some other cause. Anyhow, I'll see to it at once." His appetite seemed to be satisfied, for he didn't eat another mouthful and, after looking at his watch, apologetically said he must get back to the office. "Many thanks for a delicious lunch," he said. They drove back to Great Lewisham Street together.

Mr. Turkes came down to Bob's room the next afternoon. He seemed quite pleased with himself and was rubbing his hands together. "It was the rats, Fanning," he said. "There was quite a colony up there, but I've taken steps to evict them, and I hope you won't be bothered again."

"Thanks very much, sir," replied young Bob, "but they don't really bother me; it was just that I wondered what the cause was." (Some rats! he added to himself incredulously.) This happened on November the first.

Bob caught a slight chill that evening and was away from the office till the afternoon of the fourth. When he reported to Mr. Turkes, he thought the latter looked a bit "on edge". He was

fidgety and staccato. (He works too hard, thought Bob, unless he's ill.)

Bob didn't stay very long as he still felt a bit shaky, but collected a couple of typescripts and went home. At dinner he said to his father, "I wish you'd talk to old Turkes, Dad; I'm sure he overdoes it and, apart from everything else, it would be an awful jar for me if he cracked up now."

"I will have a word with him if you get finally fixed up, but can't see that he works harder than thousands of other men, though I grant you he doesn't look quite right. He's not a good colour and his eyes have that curious glitter which usually means strain. I shouldn't be surprised to learn that he was an insomnia case."

Bob's illness had put him back with his work and, feeling much recovered the next morning, he resolved to make a long day of it. He worked from nine-thirty till six, with a hurried half-hour for lunch, but still found himself with considerable leeway to make up. Tired though he was, he determined to come back after dinner, a decision which revealed his inherited itch to finish a job and maintain that "clean desk" which leads to fortune, as it eventually and inevitably did in his case. So he took a taxi back to Great Lewisham Street about nine-fifteen. He had his own latchkey to the street door and let himself in. By jove! it was dark and grim and silent and chilly! The ticking of the clock in the clerk's room sounded almost menacing in its sharp rhythmic insistence. He didn't want to disturb Mr. Turkes, who was possibly in bed; so he tiptoed up the stairs by the light of a match and, when he reached his room, opened and closed the door as quietly as possible.

Mr. Beales had left some estimates on his desk for examination. He glanced over them and with his precociously commercial eye queried a binding figure in the margin. Then he set himself to correct the galley proofs of a novel, a very loathsome occupation. He found he couldn't concentrate properly. On re-reading a slip for experiment, he found he had missed three obvious mistakes. That wouldn't do one little bit. But it was so fearfully quiet and lonely, and the muffled bangs from outside, which revealed the fact that the youth of Britain still cherished the memory of ill-inspired Guy, made him start and suddenly glance behind him. And then there were other disturbing sounds. For one thing, there was that sharp, almost ringing creak which came from

somewhere in the room, probably from the filing cabinet. And, sure enough, the "rats" were back in the room above. Those sudden heavy footfalls—for why pretend they could be anything else?—never had they been so steady and urgent, as it were.

"Good Lord!" thought young Bob, "am I getting the wind up? Oh rot!" But all the same, a heath-cold wind ran down his spine and he wished he were away. Then he thought he heard the door of the room above open, and those steps seemed to move out into the corridor. He got up and opened his door with the utmost quiet caution and listened through the crack. Yes, they were in the corridor, and suddenly he heard the voice of Mr. Turkes, though it was strange and high-pitched, and only just recognizable. "You! You! What do you want?" and then there was a scream, a horrible, doubtful sound, a crash, and then—utter silence.

Young Bob stood perfectly still for a moment while he rallied all his "guts" to go out and mount that flight of stairs. The battle won, he flung open the door and, looking extraordinarily like old Bob at moments of crisis, he dashed upstairs. As he reached the top he noticed, in a casual flash, that the door of the locked room was open. Facing him was Mr. Turkes' bedroom, with its door open, too. The light was on. Mr. Turkes was lying in his night-shirt on the floor by the bed and he was rocking gently on his shoulder blades. His hands were at his throat and his tongue—well, young Bob had never realized before what a large thing was the human tongue. And then something went past him and flung him back. There was no actual contact, but some harsh force flung him aside. Young Bob knelt down by Mr. Turkes' hide. As he did so, the publisher ceased to rock gently on his shoulder blades and his hands fell from his throat to the floor—and Bob knew that he was looking on a dead man for the first time in his life—and there were ten scarlet patches on the dead man's throat, which faded and passed almost as he saw them.

He dashed down and out into the street and got hold of a weary copper, round whose massive person many squibs had flamed that evening. "Go up to the top floor," exclaimed Bob. "I'll get the doctor in Streatham Street."

When he and the physician reached the top floor, the constable was in the locked room and pulling out from a big wooden coal-bin a broken scarecrow of corruption which once had housed the

spirit of Mr. James Talbot who, so it subsequently transpired, had perished prematurely by the agency of a bullet through his brain because he had made a contract with Mr. Turkes, the dominating clause of which laid down that he and the said Mr. Turkes should contribute £6,000 each for the purpose of founding and conducting a publishing business, and that, in the event of one of them dying or retiring, the other should have the whole twelve thousand pounds under his control. The wording of these clauses was so adroit and calculated that it applied precisely to such a contingency as the disappearance of Mr. Talbot on a certain Guy Fawkes Day.

These events necessitated two inquests. The demise of Mr. Turkes was found to have been due to natural causes—cardiac degeneration. The jury decided that Mr. Talbot had been wilfully murdered by Mr. Turkes.

Young Bob is now a partner in the firm of Fanning and Beales, which took over the staff, stock, and good-will of Turkes and Talbot. The firm is prospering, for they are a hard-working, mutually complementary team. The scene of their activities is not, however, 43 Great Lewisham Street, premises which, to the embarrassment of the Duke of Rutford's agent, no one seems at all anxious to occupy.

Some years later Fanning and Beales published a monumental work on psychic phenomena by a famous French savant who came to London to discuss the details with Bob. The latter, on reading through the translation, was rather startled to come upon a case, perfectly established and documented, which bore a very strong resemblance to that one in which he had once played a small part. The professor took a fancy to Bob, to his personality, probity, and thoroughness; and spent no little time with him, a great honour, as Bob realized. One day he summoned up courage and told of the events of the evening of November the fifth, 192—. The professor listened intently, and said when Bob had finished:

"A case of great interest. I am much obliged to you. A bad experience for you, without doubt."

"It was rather," replied Bob. "Now I expect it's a silly question, but is there any explanation of things like that?"

The professor shrugged his heavy shoulders.

"Explanation? No. The people always want the explanation.

If we cannot give them one, they say, 'Just a Christmas fairy tale. How,' they say, 'can one hear the footsteps of the dead? How can one see the dead man walk up the stairs? How can the dead man kill for revenge? Pouf!' they say, 'a romance. And a year after to the day. Too exact. You cannot convince me with your bogey-men.' But, my friend, such things are *not* romances, and in many, many cases about which I have inquired, the anniversary has—to use a too vague word—a mystic significance. Some force storing itself up finds then its moment of release, is permitted operation, on the anniversary. 'Tell us why,' say the people. 'The explanation, if you please.' But I say, '*The thing happened.*' The explanation, the law may be found out some day, perhaps. But *these things happen.* If you don't believe so, read my book.' That, my good friend, is what I tell the people who say such things don't happen. I say, 'Very well, then, read my book.' " And he laughed his enormous laugh.

HISTORY AND CHRONOLOGY OF THE **NECRONOMICON**

by H. P. LOVECRAFT

TOGETHER WITH A FEW PERTINENT PARAGRAPHS

by AUGUST DERLETH

Long before the death of H. P. Lovecraft in March, 1937, a considerable body of legend had grown up about the mythical *Necronomicon*, so frequently alluded to in his major short stories and novels. The editors of *Weird Tales*, librarians, booksellers, and fellow writers were applied to by dazzled readers for information leading to the whereabouts of copies of this rare book; many of the applicants refused to believe that the book did not exist and was the sole creation of H. P. Lovecraft, and actually bluntly turned back such information as being designed to keep them from getting hold of the book. Prior to his death, Lovecraft prepared a whimsical *History and Chronology of the Necronomicon*, as follows:

Original title *Al Azif* — *Azif* being the word used by the Arabs to designate that nocturnal sound (made by insects) supposed to be the howling of daemons.

Composed by Abdul Alhazred, a mad poet of Sanaa, in Yemen, who is said to have flourished during the period of the Ommiade Caliphs, circa A. D. 700. He visited the ruins of Babylon and the subterranean secrets of Memphis and spent ten years alone in the great southern desert of Arabia, the Roba El Khaliyeh or "Empty Space" of the ancients and "Dahna" or "Crimson Desert" of the modern Arabs, which is held to be inhabited by protective evil spirits and monsters of death. Of this desert many strange and unbelievable marvels are told by those who pretend to have penetrated it. In his last years Alhazred dwelt in Damascus, where the *Necronomicon* (*Al Azif*) was written, and of his final death or disappearance (A. D. 738) many terrible and conflicting things are told. He is said by Ebn Khallikan (twelfth century biographer) to have been seized by an invisible monster in broad daylight and devoured horribly before a large number of fright-frozen witnesses. Of his madness

many things are told. He claimed to have seen the fabulous Irem, or City of Pillars, and to have found beneath the ruins of a certain nameless desert town the shocking annals and secrets of a race older than mankind. He was only an indifferent Moslem, worshipping unknown Entities whom he called Yog-Sothoth and Cthulhu.

In A. D. 950 the *Azif*, which had gained a considerable though surreptitious circulation amongst the philisophers of the age, was secretly translated into Greek by Theodorus Philetas of Constantinople under the title *Necronomicon*. For a century it impelled certain experimenters to terrible attempts, when it was suppressed and burnt by the patriarch Michael. After this it was only heard of furtively, but Olaus Wormius made a Latin translation later in the Middle Ages (1228), and the Latin text was printed twice—once in the fifteenth century in black letter (evidently in German) and once in the seventeenth (probably Spanish); both editions being without identifying marks, and located as to time and place by internal typographical evidence only. The work, both Latin and Greek, was banned by Pope Gregory IX in 1232 shortly after its Latin translation, which called attention to it. The Arabic original was lost as early as Wormius' time, as indicated by his prefatory note; (there is, however, a vague account of a secret copy appearing in San Franscisco during the present century but later perished by fire) and no sight of the Greek copy—which was printed in Italy between 1500 and 1550—has been reported since the burning of a certain Salem man's library in 1692. A translation made by Dr. Dee was never printed, and exists only in fragments recovered from the original manuscript. Of the Latin texts now existing one (fifteenth century) is known to be in the British Museum under lock and key, while another (seventeenth century) is in the Bibliotheque Nationale at Paris. A seventeenth century edition is in the Widener Library at Harvard, and in the library at Miskatonic University at Arkham; also in the library of the University of Buenos Aires. Numerous other copies probably exist in secret, and a fifteenth century one is persistently rumored to form part of the collection of a celebrated American millionaire. A still vaguer rumor credits the preservation of a sixteenth century Greek text in the Salem family of Pickman, but if it was so preserved, it vanished with the artist, R. U. Pickman, who disappeared in 1926. The book is rigidly suppressed by the authorities of most

countries, and by all branches of organized ecclesiasticism. Reading leads to terrible consequences. It was from rumors of this book (of which relatively few of the general public know) that R. W. Chambers is said to have derived the idea of his early novel, *The King in Yellow*.

1. *Al Azif* written circa A. D. 730 at Damascus by Abdul Alhazred.
2. Translated into Greek as *Necronomicon*, A. D. 950 by Theodorus Philetas.
3. Burnt by Patriarch Michael, A. D. 1050 (i.e., Greek text—Arabic text now lost.)
4. Olaus translates Greek into Latin, A. D. 1228.
5. Latin and Greek editions suppressed by Gregory IX, A. D. 1232.
6. Black letter edition. Germany, 1400?
7. Greek text printed in Italy, 1500-1550.
8. Spanish translation of Latin text, 1600?

Despite the obvious spoofing of this fictional history and chronology, despite the sly admixture of historical names and dates with such fictional references as the Pickman family of Salem (cf. *Pickman's Model*), and the attempt to suggest that the *Necronomicon*, invented by Lovecraft, had influenced the writing of Chambers' *The King in Yellow*, written years before, when in fact Lovecraft had drawn upon the Chambers book for the embroidering of the myth pattern of which the *Necronomicon* was a vital part, hundreds of readers continued and doubtless continue to believe that this fancied book actually existed. The letters continue to come from those who want to get their hands on the book, doubtless for nefarious purposes.

Perhaps the *Necronomicon* was a pat subject for a hoax, and it was not surprising therefore to find in catalog number 78, issued in summer 1946, by Philip C. Duschnes of New York, the following item: "511. THE NECRONOMICON. By Abdul Alhazred. Translated from the Arabic into Latin by Olaus Wormius. With many woodcut tables of mystic signs and symbols (Madrid), 1647. Small folio, full calf with elaborate overall stamping in blind, including the date, 1715. Binding somewhat stained and rubbed, very slight foxing, mostly in first 30 pages. Page 751-2 has at one time been almost completely ripped out, but has been skillfully repaired. Otherwise in fine condition. \$375.00. One of only fourteen known copies of the first Latin

edition, and one of the only three complete copies in the United States, the others being in the Library of J. Pierce Whitmore in McCook, Nebraska, and the library of Miskatonic University, Arkham, Mass. Only two copies of the manuscript in Arabic were known, and both were in Europe before the war. Their fate is not yet revealed. The author, Alhazred, is said to have been hopelessly mad when he wrote this work, several almost incoherent passages lending credence to this story. Yet Von Junzt, in his *Unaussprechlichen Kulten*, states (p. ix) ' . . . es steht ausser Zweifel, dass dieses Buch ist die Grundlage der Okkulteliteratur.'

Winfield Townley Scott hailed the notice in his column, *Bookman's Gallery* in *The Providence Journal*, as a "Considerable Item". He went on, after quoting the listing, to add: "Now that is enormously interesting because, so far as I am aware, everyone who has written about Lovecraft has assumed the *Necronomicon* to be an ancient book of demonology which existed only in Lovecraft's mind. As August Derleth says in H. P. L.: A MEMOIR, ' . . . Lovecraft drew up a history and chronology so convincing that many a librarian and many a bookhandler has been called upon to supply copies.' Well — barring an expensive and unlikely hoax — Mr. Duschnes' listing reveals that the *Necronomicon* does exist. But note the cream of the jest (I suppose inadvertent) in the Duschnes' cataloguing: the copy at 'the library of Miskatonic University, Arkham, Mass.' Wheels within wheels. There is of course no such University or town — except in Howard Lovecraft's stories."

Mr. Scott in his enthusiasm was hoaxed, of course; he missed the additional jest in Mr. Duschnes' bland quoting of another imaginary tome, the Von Junzt *Unaussprechlichen Kulten* — how well I remember the discursive correspondence with R. E. Howard and Lovecraft as to whether the book, then in process of being invented, should be given this title or another, slightly less suggestive! — as evidence. The hoax naturally, was quickly exposed; I wrote Scott at once that if indeed any such book were offered, it was a fraud, unconditionally, and Duschnes himself wrote to Scott: "Of course, the whole thing is a hoax and the give-away is the fact that I mentioned a copy in the University at Arkham, Mass., both the university and the town being non-existent in the State of Massachusetts. You asked why I did it and I do not know other than that I was tired of cataloguing

real books for many years and I thought I would make up one for the fun of it. I think I may be excused on the basis that a little laugh now and then is worth having."

Coincidentally, the Duschnes hoax was publicized in *The Saturday Review of Literature*, in the columns of William Rose Benet, who, with his brother, Stephen Vincent, had been among the first widely-known writers to recognize the specific if limited genius which was H. P. Lovecraft's at the same time that L. Sprague de Camp was featuring an article on pseudobiblia, including the *Necronomicon*, a portion of his forthcoming book on the subject.

Doubtless the legend of the *Necronomicon* will continue to grow. True, several enterprising amateur writers have besieged Arkham House to permit them to "write" the book, but this, of course, could not be done; the book is a literary property, of course, as the invention of Lovecraft, and duly under copyright protection. Nor could Arkham House or the estate of H. P. Lovecraft sanction so wanton a hoax, no matter how seriously done or how well-intentioned. It would certainly amuse and entertain H. P. Lovecraft if he could know the spurious reality his invented book has assumed in the years since its invention.

THREE POEMS

By CLARK ASHTON SMITH

LAMIA

Out of her desert lair the lamia came,
A lovely serpent shaped as women are;
Meeting me there, she hailed me by the name

Beloved lips had used in days afar;
And when the lamia sang, it seemed I heard
The voice of love in some old avatar.

Her fatal beauty like a philtre stirred
Through all my blood and filled my heart with light:
I wedded her with ardor undeterred

By the strange mottlings of her body white,
By the things that crept across us in her den
And the dead who lay beside us through the night.

Colder her flesh than serpents of the fen:—
Yet on her breast I lost mine ancient woe
And found the joy forbid to living men. . .

But, ah—it was a thousand years ago
I took the lovely lamia for bride . . .
And nevermore shall they that meet me know
It is a thousand years since I have died.

THE NAMELESS WRAITH

As one who seeks the silver moth of night
Where moonless gardens lose the afterglow,
My soul went forth ineffably, to know
Some vaguer vision unrevealed of light.

From halcyon fells whereon the falcons range,
From Hesper, and the sunsets mountain-born,
And from the trembling freshness of the morn
I turned me to a dreamland still and strange.

It seemed the hueless ashes of the day
And darkened glories filled that glooming world;
The spectrum of hesternal suns was furled
In immemorial valleys vast and grey.

Ruins, and wrecks of many a foundered year,
Doubtfully known, bestrewed the unvisioned verge,
Where, from unsounding reaches of blind surge,
Some nameless wraith of beauty fluttered near.

Was it the dove from shrines of lost delight?
The nightingale from love's necropolis?
What dream-led messenger of time's abyss
Came from the dark, and vanished in the night?

THE CITY OF DESTRUCTION

The incognizable kings of Night, within their unrevealed abyss,
Have built them a metropolis against the kingdoms of the light.
Its mountain-passing ramparts climb exalted from the nadir flats
In black, Babelian ziggurats that tier the dusk of nether time.
Prodigious, dire and indistinct, with horns that lift the heavens'
doom,
Its turrets crowd the skyless gloom huge as the night of hells
extinct.
The hostile gulfs for armor wear its walls as of a thousand
Romes,
The swollen menace of its domes enhelms the swart, inimic air.
The Powers to darkness ministrant, building their dreadful
citadel,
Have fortified them supremely well with massed, eternal
adamant
Quarried from out of the core entire of suns that night and ice
entomb;
Their secret furnaces relume the stone that once was stellar fire.
The monstrous lamps of Death and Mars like demon moons
emblaze their halls;
The watchfires on the infernal walls flame like a crown of fallen
stars.

From out the sunken courts resound colossal enineries of doom;
Some slow, malign, tremendous loom dismally rumbles under-
ground.
Dour shuttles clack implacably; unknown machines, with clang-
orous ire,
Beat in their hearts of throbbing fire the instants of eternity.
The crooked arms of titan cranes, with grasp Briarean, momentarily
Lift to the dim, infernal sky a nameless freight in stretched chains;
And Acheronian waters roar, constrained, relentless, subterranean,
Where at their evil toil unseen the hellish wheels moan evermore.

INTRODUCTION:

STRANGE PORTS OF CALL

20 Masterpieces of Science-Fiction

by AUGUST DERLETH

Few developments in the various branches of fantasy in fiction have occasioned such interest and controversy as that development known as science fiction. The controversy about science-fiction is all the more pointed because many of its most vocal adherents do not themselves seem to know how to define it. It has been described by one anthologist as fiction which concerns itself with the future, and by another as fiction of prophecy, philosophy, and adventure. But actually science-fiction embraces all imaginative fiction which grows out of scientific concepts, whether in mathematics or geology or nuclear fission or biology or any scientific concept whatsoever, whether already demonstrated or whether projected out of the writer's imagination into future space and time out of the known store of scientific knowledge.

The classification is a modern one, but the science-fiction story has a long and honorable lineage, only slightly less than that development of fantasy popularly known as the Gothic novel, though the early classics of science-fiction such as Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), and Lewis Holberg's *Journey to the World Under Ground* (c. 1740) — so great an influence in the work of Edgar Allan Poe—were primarily written as social criticism, and were utopian in concept. Indeed, save for such an outstanding exception as Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), most of the novels in the genre which came after them in the nineteenth century were predominantly utopian in character, and for more than a century the science-fiction novel was first and foremost a sociological novel.

With Poe, however, the direction changed, becoming more philosophical and adventurous. After Poe came Fitz-James O'Brien, Jules Verne, Ambrose Bierce, Jack London, Arthur Conan Doyle, Frank Stockton, Mark Twain, H. G. Wells, and many another, though it was Verne and Wells who made the science-fiction novel popular, Verne particularly exemplifying the tale of adventure based on scientific concepts and prophecy, Wells that of philosophical direction. Indeed, even today for the general

reader—as apart from the *aficionado*—Wells and Verne stand for their knowledge of what is science-fiction, and it is novels like *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*, *The Time Machine*, *The War of the Worlds*, *Journey to the Center of the Earth*, and *From the Earth to the Moon* that the average reader conceives of as science-fiction.

The modern development, however, has been away from Verne and Wells. The renaissance of science-fiction came about in 1926, when, inspired by the success of *Weird Tales*, established in 1923 and using science-fiction stories as well as tales of horror, the supernatural, and *contes cruel*, Hugo Gernsback launched the magazine *Amazing Stories*. Though this magazine was given over at first very largely to reprints of stories which had appeared elsewhere—in *Blue Book*, *Munsey's*, *Argosy*, *Science and Invention*, and similar magazines—it soon began to publish original work from new writers. The success of *Amazing Stories* in turn stimulated competitors, and soon there were a host of magazines specializing in stories of science—*Astounding Stories*, *Planet Stories*, *Science Wonder Stories*, *Startling Stories*, *Thrilling Wonder Stories*, *Fantastic Adventures*, *Astonishing Stories*, *Famous Fantastic Mysteries*, *Wonder Stories*, and others, from among which, at first under the guidance of Harry Bates, and later under that of the astute and able John W. Campbell, Jr., *Astounding Science-Fiction*, easily outdistanced all competitors to lead the field in the publication of new and different work in the genre.

It is a curious and lamentable fact that in most science-fiction stories human beings are somewhat less than human beings; they are effigies of men and women, and there is no human warmth in them. The writer's interest is primarily in the "gadget" or, in modern parlance, the "gimmick", and it is this which ensnares his whole interest at the expense of his characters. Yet the plain indisputable fact is that the great stories, whether in the fields of romance or fantasy, concern people to whom something happens, and not just people who are conveniently present to attend the birth of some fanciful scientific concept. It is because of this curious lack that there are so few really memorable stories in the genre of science-fiction.

The overwhelming majority of science-fiction stories are merely orthodox adventure tales with the trappings of interplanetary travel or prophecy, written on an adolescent level; indeed, though

many very capable writers have broken away from this early tradition, there are still magazines in the field, the letters-columns of which appear to be traditionally conducted and in part written on a level which can only be described as sub-moronic,* a distinction all the more pointed when these pages are compared to the famed *Brass Tacks* section of *Astounding Science-Fiction*. The early science-fiction tale, however, was as patterned and hackneyed as it is possible to imagine. I have described it elsewhere ** by contrasting it to the adventure story in these words:

"The difference lies in this: that instead of a traditional villain who also wants the girl, a host of Martians, Venusians, or what have you, serve as villains in the piece against a background of extensions of known scientific concepts into the realm of the extremely fanciful. Edgar Rice Burroughs' Martian tales are prototypes, and the basic theme seldom varies — motivated by a variety of events such as a terrestrial plague, a vital interest in rocket-ships, the noble impulse to be sacrificed to science, and so forth, the hero and the heroine, who is sometimes a stowaway, set forth bravely into the interstellar spaces. They duly arrive at the moon, Mars, Venus, or some hitherto unknown world or galaxy, and there immediately encounter creatures who are inimical to them . . . and there begins a titanic struggle for the girl, who, strangely, seems also to be an object of especial interest to the insectivorous or batrachian or reptilian inhabitants of this extra-terrestrial place. After a series of harrowing adventures, which may or may not include a full-scale war between worlds, the hero fetches the heroine back from hideous captivity, and they make the rocket-ship or the interstellar patrol just in time, with a horde of ravening citizens of this alien world at their heels."

Fortunately, this pattern has been subjected to such ridicule that it has all but died in contemporary magazines of science-fiction. The work of such writers as Olaf Stapledon, S. Fowler Wright, C. S. Lewis, H. F. Heard, Garrett Serviss and a few others pioneered the direction away from the simple adventure-romance pattern, and the result has been wholly felicitous. Yet it would be going too far to assert, as one anthologist did, that the majority of the writing being done in this still virtually new field is literature. Far too much of science-fiction today suffers from coterie

* In making this reference before a fan group in Newark last year, I found it necessary, because of intra-fan controversy, to specify that my targets were **not** published out of Chicago.

***Writing Fiction*, The Writer, Inc., Boston, 1946.

writing, which makes it impossible for the general reader, as apart from the *aficionado*, to follow the science-fiction story with any vital understanding. That is to say, too many writers in the field have developed on the one hand a flip, casual, over-the-shoulder manner of writing which is far removed from literature, and on the other, an assumption that the reader knows his basic science sufficiently well so that he will immediately grasp any concept put forward by them. The relationship of those writers to general fiction is in the field of the hard-boiled story, but this, in turn, is one of the most difficult to write as literature, and even the best of story concepts fall short of making an ineptly written story literature.

But there is still a substantial minority of excellent writing in the field of science-fiction, and I have striven to gather together in this book certain stories, all now out of print, which seems to me to have sufficient literary value to assure them of an existence extending beyond our immediate time. Some of the stories I would have liked for this anthology have already appeared in other fine collections — Donald A. Wollheim's *The Pocket Book of Science-Fiction* and *The Portable Novels of Science*; Groff Conklin's *The Best of Science-Fiction*, and *Adventures in Time and Space*, edited by Raymond J. Healy and J. Francis McComas — but none of the stories in this book has ever appeared in any anthology and the majority of them have never appeared in book form.

It is not a coincidence that *Strange Ports of Call* should begin with a memorable allegory, in science-fiction terms, on the creation — *The Cunning of the Beast*, by Nelson Bond — and that it should end with two stories of the earth's destruction — *Blunder*, by Philip Wylie, and *The Million Year Picnic*, by Ray Bradbury. Between them there is a miniature history of mankind and a glimpse of his future in terms of science-fiction. There are stories of mutation in nature (*The Worm*, by David H. Keller), of man confronted by something beyond his ken (*The Crystal Bullet*, by Donald Wandrei; *The Thing from Outside*, by George Allan England), of man's exploration of the remote history of the earth (*At the Mountains of Madness*, by H. P. Lovecraft), of an elusive contact with a sister-planet, delightfully tantalizing and told with a mock-gravity which jibes gently at the frequent newspaper accounts of strange radio messages "from space" (*Mars in the Ether*, by Lord Dunsany, for awareness of which, as well as for

other helpful suggestions, I am indebted to A Langley Searles), as well as Mr. H. G. Wells' early story of contact with Mars in a less orthodox manner (*The Crystal Egg*).

There is a story of higher mathematics which is a minor classic of science-fiction and is not without humor (*John Jones' Dollar*, by Harry Stephen Keeler; there are tales of man's scientific experiments escaping his control (*The God-Box*, by Howard Wandrei; *Mr. Bauer and the Atoms*, by Fritz Leiber, Jr.); there are accounts of malign invaders from outside (*Call Him Demon*, by Henry Kuttner; *A Guest in the House*, by Frank Belknap Long; *The Lost Street*, by Carl Jacobi and Clifford Simak); there are unorthodox interplanetary tales: *Master of the Asteroid*, by Clark Ashton Smith; *Forgotten*, by P. Schuyler Miller); and there are three notable stories of man's future worlds, *Far Centaurus*, by A. E. Van Vogt; *Thunder and Roses*, by Theodore Sturgeon; *The Green Hills of Earth*, by Robert A. Heinlein.

Each of these stories is distinguished not alone for originality of concept, but for its manner of presentation. They exemplify the best in science-fiction, that respectable body of work which seems to me destined to be looked upon by future generations as the outstanding science-fiction in the short form of the genre, since, admittedly, as John W. Campbell, Jr. has pointed out in his foreword to *The Best of Science Fiction*, the longer form is "far more apt to be effective than the short story". Quite possibly the excellence of Lovecraft's short novel, *At the Mountains of Madness*, bears out Mr. Campbell's contention; yet none of these stories suffers for the need of explanatory text for the primary reason that these stories, unlike much science-fiction, concern man first and foremost — man in his reaction to other dimensions, other laws, other science, other worlds — and their appeal is thus that basically universal one of related and recognizable human behavior. The men who walk through these stories are no mere stock characters, no imaginative creations designed to symbolize the inhabitants of other worlds; they are multi-dimensional, intensely real people, confronted with violations or mutations of those laws of science which they had come to believe unalterable.

Strange Ports of Call, therefore, supplements the stories in the four collections previously named; and the reader is urged to read these collections as well, if he has not already done so. Together, they offer a well-rounded picture of the science-fiction of our own time.

A LITTLE ANTHOLOGY

edited by Malcolm Ferguson

(Being a collection of random notes in the domain of the strange and outlandish, the fantastic and the supernatural, out of little-known crannies in books and sundry other places.)

If a man could pass through Paradise in a dream, and have a flower presented to him as a pledge that his soul had really been there, and if he found that flower in his hand when he awoke — ay! and what then — Coleridge: *Anima Poetae*.

* * * *

"When we have thus admitted that FRANKENSTEIN has passages which appal the mind and make the flesh creep, we have given it all the praise (if praise it can be called) which we dare bestow. Our taste and our judgement alike revolt at this kind of writing; and the greater the ability with which it may be executed, the worse it is." — Sir Walter Scott, quoted by Andrew Block, London second-hand book-dealer and bibliographer, in offering for sale a first edition of Mary Shelley's triple-decker novel at thirty-five pounds. Sir Walter, as ballad-editor and writer of such Gothic ballads as *The Dance of Death*, is not above being rated himself in these matters.

* * * *

There are certain weird, primeval, unaccountable, dark, sometimes monstrous concepts in our nature-poetry which may have their far-off roots in the dim world the Neolithic people made for their imagination. — Stopford A. Brooke; *English Literature from the Beginning to the Norman Conquest*.

* * * *

Upton and Leigh give much more useful information about the Unicorn. His horn is the best possible test of water. The other beasts do not dare to taste of any fountain till he has stirred it with his horn to ascertain if any wily dragon have deposited his venom therein. A Unicorn, it is well known, may be caught quite easily (like Samson) if the proper precautions be employed. "A mayd is set where he haunteth, and she openeth her lappe, to whom the Unicorn as seeking rescue from the hunter yeldeth his head, and leaveth all his fierceness, and sleapeth untill he be taken and slayn." — *The New Quarterly Review*, 1874.

The knight Heinrich von Falkenstein, who did not believe in demons, was instructed by a conjuror to draw with his sword a circle at the crossing of two roads. Wild sheets of water seemed to enclose him. The shrieking of a great storm and the grunting of swine smote his ears. Then the shadow of a human form floated over the trees. This was the Devil who, on coming closer, appeared as a tall black man with such a loathsome face that his gaze became unbearable. To prove his power, the Devil related under just what conditions the Knight had lost his innocence. After his meeting with the Devil, the Knight remained pale and never regained his natural colour. — Caesarius von Heisterbach: c. 1240.

! * * * *

A tight-lipped man in a muffler came into a bar, where he sat quietly waiting to be served.

"What'll you have?"

No reply.

"Beer?"

Slow negative nod.

"Whisky?"

Slow affirmative nod.

"Double?"

Slow affirmative nod, followed by a deliberate draining of the glass.

"Another?"

Slow negative nod.

"Bourbon?"

Slow affirmative nod.

"Been to the races?"

A nodded yes.

"Win "

Slow negative nod.

"Oh, oh. D'ja split even?"

Slow negative nod.

"D'ja lose ten bucks?"

Denial registered.

"Twenny?"

Slow negative again.

Another nodded no.

"Hunert?"

No again.

"Fi' hunnert?"

No again.

By this time the bartender was gripping the edge of the bar.
"A thousand berries?"

Slow affirmative nod.

"Good God! If I lost a thousand I'd cut my throat!"

Slowly and quietly the man removed his muffler.

* * * *

Whosoeur dare flatlie denie these manyfolde and agreeable testimonies of the olde and newe writers, he seemeth unworthie in my judgement, of any credite, whatsoeur he may say. For as it is a great token of lightnesse, if one by and by beleeeve every man which saithe, he hath seene spirits: so on the other side it is great impudencie, if a man rashely and impudently contemme all things which are aduouched, of so many, and so credible Historiographers, and aunciente fathers, and other grave men of great authoritie. — Lewes Lavater: *Of Ghostes and Spirites Walking by Nyght*, 1572

* * * *

THE WIND IN THE ROSE-BUSH AND OTHER STORIES. "The title story is a masterpiece of insight, significance, controlled imagination . . . Miss Wilkins has never been one to make use of hackneyed tools; yet a striking feature of these tales of the supernatural is the complete avoidance of the conventional vocabulary of horror. Miss Wilkins' ghosts do not require a dark and musty milieu; and by the unexpectedness of their introduction into the familiar, sunlighted, domestic scenes, she secures an intensity of effect that the well-worn machinery of ghost-literature could never compass. Nor would any less conventional writer than Miss Wilkins have bethought himself to assign such fitting individualities to these by no means passive apparitions; or to replace the sinister criminal of tradition with such bland and cheerful substitutes as figure in *The Shadows on the Wall* and *The Wind in the Rosebush*. Nothing could be more uncannily appropriate than that the ghost of malicious Aunt Harriet, who haunted the southwest chamber, should have been given to petty, teasing tricks, like snatching bodices and brooches. It is the pastime of the little ghost, overworked during its baby lifetime, to glide pathetically about the house in search of clothes to put away or dishes to wash." — *The Critic*, August, 1903.

In 1531, a Merman, caught in the Baltic, was sent to Sigismund, king of Poland, with whom, says the account, he lived three days, and was seen by the whole court; but whether he died or escaped at the end of that period, we cannot say. But in some tracts published by John Gregory, A. M., and chaplain of Christ Church, Oxford, in 1650, this identical Merman is described "as a huge animal of the human form, but very much resembling a bishop in his pontificals." A German engraving of this being I have seen; it is extremely curious.

Georgius Trapanzantius declares that he himself saw a Merman, extremely beautiful, rise many times above water; he adds, that in Epirus, a Merman came on shore, and watched near a spring of water, endeavoring to catch young women that came there; he was caught, but could not be made to eat.

If for so many hundred years, the existence of a quadruped has been a matter of speculative inquiry, when man has the power of traversing the place of its habitation, and by the progress of the arts of piercing its deepest recesses, how much more probable is it, that a creature should exist in the bosom of the ocean, with which we are not perfectly acquainted. When we consider that in the depths of the waters, we have no reach, no power of visual observation, or means of pursuing inquiry; it is an abyss which may contain unheard of treasures, but it is one that cannot be irradiated by the beams that would disclose them to man. — *The Museum of Foreign Literature and Sciences*, Littell, 1834.

MARA

By STEPHEN GRENDON

I had somehow supposed that my old friends would be satisfied to forget me in the face of my indifference to their letters, and yet perhaps that was taking too much for granted. Certainly you, above all, ought to have some kind of explanation, and, knowing me, you know I am not given to inventing things, I must tell the truth or nothing, and in this case the truth is not easily told. I hope you will believe me. I know I would not even now be writing to you if it were not for your insistent letter threatening to come to see me. Because I do not want you to come. Please believe that it is not out of any animosity that I ask it; I have only the fondest memories of you, and in other circumstances I would like nothing better than to see you, but no, no, it is impossible, it is better this way, just left without seeing each other again.

But I know too that I cannot ask this of you without telling you how it is with me. I can tell you easier than I could tell anyone else; you have known me better, perhaps as well as any one can come to know another. But no one person ever gets to know any other completely; you understand how that is, of course; we are all creatures of a thousand impulses springing from unknown pasts, from forces beyond our control, as it were, and none of us is so much given to habit that he is always perfectly predictable. You will say that this is a preface leading up to something, and you will be right, as always! such it is. It is in a way a preface to confession, for in this case the confession must come before what else I have to tell you, because without it, you would not quite "see" the aftermath.

I shall not trouble to delay any longer, for this letter is likely to be long enough without involved explanations; and if I do seem to wander a little, do bear with me, and above all, do — I beg of you — do understand that the man who is writing to you is the same man you always knew, except in one particular — he has allowed to fall away all those masks with which each of us protects himself from the world each time he is not alone. And because I am tired I do not want to put them on any more.

It begins, then, a long time ago — more than a decade ago, just after I had built my house, this house, on the edge of Water-

bury, across from the mountain. You will remember how everyone said that it was a shame for a young bachelor in his early thirties to have such a fine house all by himself, and all the usual remarks about my having got the "nest" and now to hurry and get the "bird". What you did not know perhaps was that I was not living in this house alone. I know that you saw Mara at least once when you were here; she was then a stenographer, and you said that she was pretty, and I answered that perhaps she was, and you said something about my being too much alone, and lonely, and you said too I had ought to think of getting married and settling down. I remember all this so clearly because, you see, it all began immediately after. It began one night when I worked late with Mara; I was tired and I suspect I was dissatisfied with what I had written. That night Mara came to my room and came into my bed and put her arms around me. "You are lonely," she said. "Yes," I said. And I was — terribly lonely

I should tell you this about Mara before anything more — she was amoral, very amoral. She did not come to me at first because she loved me, but I think later, in her own way, she did come to love me, and for a long time I was very happy with her. I know you may be unpleasantly surprised to learn this, because both Mara and I wore our masks well, people never suspected anything. Perhaps it was because Mara was "socially" beneath me — for whatever such distinctions may mean. I gave her money for many things, but never too much at any one time, and she dressed well, she always looked very beautiful, and, yes, surely, in her own way she was beautiful, because — there is no longer any reason why I should try to conceal it — I loved her.

Perhaps it was absurd that someone in my position should fall in love with a girl like Mara — because she was, after all, hardly more than that. Twenty, I think. But there was something inside me that made love impossible for any time, except under my own conditions; no one could judge me any more harshly than I long ago judged myself; but I cannot help it. I have always been terribly proud — not of anything I have done; there is nothing in that — but just proud with a kind of personal integrity, that same integrity which has always made it impossible for me to lie, even to tell a "white lie".

So, you see, it was natural that that pride would some day clash with the emotion I felt for Mara. Perhaps after all I did not

love her with a love overpowering enough to conquer all, for I wanted to marry her eventually, I wanted her to be someone I need not fear for in the company of my friends, and to that end I was teaching her little things — oh, so many things she would need to know to prevent herself from being trapped by the wives of some of my friends, who would enjoy exposing her to their merciless cruelty. You know how women can be; I do not need to tell you.

But I am digressing; forgive me. I lived with Mara as man and wife, in all but legal fact, for six months, when she was unfaithful to me with the young man who drove my car for me; and in short, she was pregnant by him. I cannot explain to you how I felt; she had no feeling for him at all; she had no explanation except that she had impulsively wanted him and had taken him in her amorality.

There is nothing to be gained in expanding my story at this point. I did what I could for her, I gave her money to have the baby, I told her she must marry Arthur, but I made it clear that I could not keep either of them there. So they were married and they went away, and afterward there came her heartbreaking letters, tender with love, wretched with longing for this house to which she had become attached, and filled with her misery with Arthur, who did not love her and could not. After the baby was born prematurely, and died, she drowned herself in the river that flowed past the house where she lived.

That is Mara's story.

Pride kept me from her when she asked to see me, and her death was so great a shock to me that I closed this house and went away, at first to Europe, and then to Asia. I forgot her there, if I could not forget how she had been. You must understand that I am writing this to you fully conscious of how ridiculous it looks in black on white, how incredible it must seem to you that someone like myself could become so attached to a girl like Mara, who you once called a "baggage", a description with which I am not disposed to take issue. But love her I did. And who can say what love is? I assure you, I would not attempt to do so. And I loved her with even more passion for a long time after she had gone away from me than before, however paradoxical that may be. You may well say that this was but the manifestation of a driving ego deprived of something which, however obscurely, flattered it; but I think that is too simple a pattern to explain it.

However, that is not in issue. I am not writing this to offer any kind of apology or even of explanation beyond that I think you are entitled to have; while I hope that you have enough regard for me left to accept what I have to say without question, I must be honest and admit that it is a matter of complete indifference to me whether or not you believe me, just so long as you do not trouble on my account and thus add to my problems, or disturb my way of living — which is not conducive to guests.

I think that you will agree that when you saw me in New York after I had landed from abroad I did not seem to you any different from the man who went away, save that I had grown a little older, into my forties. I am still in a large sense of the word unchanged. But what has happened to me was unforeseen. From the time I left New York to re-open my house here, until now, unaccountable events have taken place. I use that word "unaccountable" advisedly; at first, you see, I wanted to account for them, but now it does not matter, bebelieve me — I accept them.

It began with little things.

You know how a house that has been long shut up feels? Stuffy and musty, a little damp, sometimes mildewed or mouldy, and dusty — it has a feeling of being deserted. When I walked into my house, it felt clean, fresh — not at all shut up. I know Blenner had opened the house when he got my wire, but it was more than that; the house was just as if it had never been left to stand untenanted. It is difficult to explain just exactly what I mean; but the house had a feeling of having been lived in without interruption. It had a warmth about it, and it was a feminine warmth. Yet, you know, it had been empty.

Well, that was the first thing — not much in itself, you will agree.

But the feeling persisted. And then were other things, each of them almost infinitesimal in itself. When I put it all down on paper like this the immensity of the absurdity of trying to make it come clear for someone else appals me; but I have begun, and I will carry on to the end of it. I cannot begin to detail everything that happened. But there were times when, for instance, I *knew* no one could possibly have been in the house, and yet things were done: the dust taken up, chairs and things put to rights, dishes washed and put away. I know how patently ridiculous it sounds, but I assure you no person could have got into my house, yet these things were done.

And sometimes they were done while I was in the house.

One night, after I had had a light lunch, I was too tired to clean the dishes; so I went up to my room and got ready for bed. The dishes could always be done by Mrs. Janney, who does for me during the day, but leaves directly after my evening meal. But I had hardly begun to undress when I heard the sound of dishes. It was uncanny, and it was impossible. And yet, when I went downstairs finally, the dishes had been washed and put away; an ash-tray I had used had been emptied and cleaned. I cannot describe to you how I felt. You have always known me for a skeptic in all things which have no ready scientific explanation; but I assure you most solemnly that everything else was as I had left it — door and windows locked, for instance, from the inside, and nothing at all to show that anyone had been in my kitchen — except for the undeniable fact that the dishes had been cleaned and put away.

I could recount a score of such instances. In the end I had to admit to myself that somehow, somewhere, someone beside myself was in my house. External evidence suggested that it was a woman.

You know, of course, that I would do everything possible to ascertain her identity; and I did. At first I was given to searching the house; I did it repeatedly and assiduously; and I did it even when I knew beyond doubt that there was no one in the house but myself. I assure you that a man like myself, facing the unknown, perhaps the unknowable, does not readily concede even the plain facts beyond any question; and I did not. I could not, of course, deny that certain things happened in my house, but I refused to acknowledge that these things were not the work of human hands.

You must understand, of course, that they were not.

I know how it sounds, but I say to you most solemnly that I am in no sense of the word deranged. But I learned about my invisible companion one night when I came in after a little card party — a party, I hasten to assure you, at which nothing more potent than a mild punch was drunk. I say this to forestall what might otherwise be your instant reaction — for which, certainly, I could not blame you.

I came into my house at or near midnight — it does not really matter which, does it? It was at night, by moonlight — a full moon shone, and you know how the mountain looks under the

moon, you have seen it; it is important that you call it back to mind, because it was that — the way the mountain looks from my bedroom window, the big, double window with the low seat at its sill — it was that which was responsible for what happened. Because when I went into the house, I did not put on a light; I did not want to destroy the illusory magic of the moonlight; you can understand this, I know; I need not dwell upon it. I wanted, you see, to look out of my dark bedroom upon the mountain under the moon; so I made my way up the stairs in the dark, knowing my way very well, naturally, and I went into my room.

There was the mountain — rising like something from another world into that sky of moonlight and far stars, with the dark fragile limbs of weeping willow making it to seem like an Oriental print — and there was something else. It took me a full minute to understand what it was — at first a kind of shimmering, literally, as if the moonlight reflected from something there among the cushions of that window-seat. But it was not a shimmering in reality; it was a strange, lovely quality of moonlight permeating something — something that had no substance and yet seemed to have body. And then I saw — I saw a woman there among my cushions, a beautiful young woman with the moonlight glowing from her hair and her features. I saw her as clearly as I saw the mountain and the willow and the window-frame, like something belonging to moonlight and the night, like the moonlight itself. And then I did not see her; there was nothing but the moonlight there, nothing . .

So you see, I knew at last why it was that things happened in my house. I was not alone, after all. I shared the house with a ghost — and a ghost who had perhaps as much right here as I. For I saw her so clearly that there could be no doubt; only a fool would doubt any longer — and I am not that, whatever my flaws. I saw her so clearly that the sight of her sent a sharp icicle of anguish through me, and I called out her name.

“Mara!” I cried.

But there was no answer. And in an instant everything pent up inside me burst forth. I was like a madman, I know. Everything I had forced down and held back, everything my pride would not permit me to admit even to myself surged up, and I knew, that had I to do it over again, I would have died for Mara if that would have meant her happiness. I loved her, and despite what she had done, she loved me; in that instant I admitted shame-

lessly what I had not dared to admit before — that I would never love anyone else as I had loved Mara and as I still loved her in the fastnesses of my heart.

I waited half of what remained of the night for sight of her again, but there was nothing — nothing but moonlight in the room, and the tangibility of memory. But once — just once, I thought I felt someone's touch. Nothing more than that.

In the morning I tried to rationalize what had happened. Hallucination, dream — everything possible occurred to me; but I knew there was no other explanation. Yet I knew, too, that Mara was dead; I knew where she had been buried; I knew that little remained of what had once been that beautiful body. I knew all this, I say — and yet I knew I had seen Mara in my room in the night, and nothing — *nothing* could shake that conviction. There was no rationalization possible; you cannot rationalize the truth out of existence. What is my concern, after all, with the academic arguments about the possibility of spectral images? And what does it matter by what name they are called, or by what means they come into being or seem to come into being? It does not matter at all, really. I know what I saw, I know what I experienced, I know that I continue to live and to work unchanged in any particular for having had that experience and those experiences which came after.

All that day I thought about Mara. You must understand that on the night I first saw her I had not been thinking of her at all. It would be idle to deny that I had thought of her from time to time; I would not attempt to do so. As I have said, it does not make any material difference what people think, in belief or disbelief. It would be only natural to think of Mara now and then — you cannot live in a house where you have spent as many happy hours as I spent with Mara during that short half year without filling every corner of it, by day and by night, (and you know the corners in a house are different by night), with little memories, so that the smallest things, like a patch of sunlight on the rug, a bluebird's song outside the window, the singing of a teakettle — these trivial things bring back sometimes the warmest, the richest memories. And, in essence, it is these little things which are life, for the major events of life happen only once, but the little things are its very fabric.

That night I had another engagement, once more to play cards. Try to imagine how I felt — playing cards, but wondering whether I would see her again, saying all the casual little things about

hands and bids and scores, and inside thinking always, consciously, "Mara! Mara! Mara!", and thinking too, quite objectively, or myself playing with such aplomb, of a man who had seen a ghost within the past twenty-four hours, and who might see her again — nay, hoped that he might see her again, soon, very soon — and thinking to ask of myself whether there might be any outward sign of what might seem to others my deterioration. You see, however much I could not believe in that as an explanation, I had to consider it, to be perfectly honest with myself.

Once again, that night, I went into my house in the darkness, I went up to my room, and there she was — not this time in the window-seat, this time lying on my bed. Her eyes were closed; she appeared to be sleeping. Her breasts rose and fell regularly, as if she breathed, and she seemed to have substance. For what must have been a long time I stood looking at her, marking every feature — even to the little mole behind her left ear, for the moonlight lay across her and the bed, and the room was suffused by direct and reflected moonlight. It was Mara — how could I have questioned it even for a moment! Hardly daring to breathe, I looked upon her as so often I had seen her — here, in this room, this bed, and it seemed to me that I could hear her say again, as on that first night, "You are lonely!" And I knew I was — terribly lonely . . .

I walked silently over. I bent above her and tried to touch her. I could not — and yet I did touch her. Can you understand? I mean that I did not touch someone of flesh and blood, but there was something, something soft, yielding, cool but not cold. And I whispered, "Mara?"

I heard her answer — the same voice, the same inflection as always. "Yes?" she said, as if just half awake — and then she was gone; and though I called out her name again and again, there was nothing more, there was never any answer.

I could not sleep. I lay waiting, waiting — while the moon swung around and the sun began to lighten the east; but there was nothing, no one, the room was cold and empty of anyone but me.

After that I waited constantly. Sometimes I went out for a short walk deliberately, and came back to my house in the darkness, and went up to my room in the darkness, hoping to find her there, but she was not there. Yet things happened as always in that house, as if she were mistress there — never so that Mrs. Janney noticed anything, of course — but with an almost precise regularity. Oh, there were some days when I thought my reason

would give under the intensity of wanting to see her, wanting to hear her voice again, yes, wanting to go back ten years and start over . . . Do try to understand how that can be, and understand too that I have always been lonely, not in the sense of being alone, but in that wider meaning we comprehend by such a term as *Weltschmerz*, for instance, or *Sehnsucht* — the Germans in this regard seem to have more definite, less all-inclusive words than we.

And then, perhaps three weeks later, I woke in the night, and I knew I was not alone. I knew without seeing, without turning to look, for the room was dark with that other-world darkness of the earliest hours of morning, just past midnight. I knew she was there, I felt her there beside me.

"Mara," I whispered.

"You are lonely," she said.

"Yes, oh yes," I answered her.

And then I felt her like someone alive, I felt her arms go around me and I felt her lips, just as it had always been during those wonderful months with her . .

Afterwards I asked her how long she had been in this house.

"I have never been away, except for that little time you sent me away," she said. "You were gone so long."

I told her I loved her.

"I know," she said. "I knew how lonely you were; I felt it — so I came back to wait for you here."

And then, "Promise me you will never go away from me again?"

I assure you, I never found any promise easier to make.

After that she was with me every night, and sometimes even in the daytime I caught glimpses of her — doing things around the house. I know how fantastic it must seem, but do believe me when I say that we never lived more like man and wife before than we have lived since then — than we are living now.

But you see, surely, that it is not a life we can share — even with so old a friend as you.

And you can understand why I cannot leave Mara ever again.

For, if I left her, what would become of her? Who would take care of her? You see, I love her — and to everyone else she is dead — dead almost ten years . .

And, if I were to lose her again, what would happen to me?

You see, these are questions to which there are no adequate answers.

There is really nothing more for me to say, nothing . . .

A HORNBOOK FOR WITCHES

By LEAH BODINE DRAKE

1. *The Besom*

When full gallop they could speed
To a coven far away,
Thrifty witches use a steed
Economical — the broom.
This asks neither stall nor groom,
Never runs a bill for hay.

2. *The Familiar*

Mangy, lean, of evil fame,
Subject to her own dark laws,
Old Grimalkin tells her dame
Ancient lore that all cats know,
And their secret: how to show
Friendship while you flex your claws!

3. *The Magic Circle*

Here within this potent round,
Witch secure from harm may stay.
Safety lies in circles: bound
In such mystic cypher goes
Earth with all the worlds. Who knows
What grim Shapes it keeps at bay?

5. *Magician's Hat*

Like a steeple to the skies
Soared the occult head-dress, once
Worn with pride by adept wise.
Round the brim the Zodiac
Whirled in scarlet thread. Alack,
Now this cap denotes the dunce!

6. Witch's Wheel

By the turning of this wheel,
Faithfulness in hearts of men
Young enchantresses can seal.
Circe long ago did hold
Such a wheel. (Yet we are told
Ulysses never came again.)

7. The Spells

There are words of awful might
That each witch-wife must be learning.
If the runes are spoken right
Fiends will hasten to obey.
Let the tongue slip — neighbors may
Suddenly smell something burning!

8. The Coven

Cross-legged on the Sarsen Stone
Satan sits, with stag-horn crown.
Witches kneeling by his throne
Wonder at his mask in fear:
Is it Sin in person here?
(More likely just a clerk from town.)

9. The Covenant

Writ on scroll of felon's skin
With her blood, for evil's sake,
Is her name. Now she is kin
To Pamphila, Endor, Bork!
Lucifer will bless her work
And reward her — with the stake.

CHECKLIST: THE CARVINGS

OF CLARK ASHTON SMITH

(While most of the Smith carvings have been sold, new pieces are constantly in preparation. Prospective owners of the weird work of Clark Ashton Smith may obtain a list of available carvings with prices from Mr. Smith at Box 627, Auburn, California. Those of the pieces which have been sold are in various collections; twenty-six are in the Arkham House collection.)

DESERT AMPHIBIAN. Head in hard tale. Monster with blunt horns and alligator muzzle.

PAN. Head in mottled talc.

BLACK PAN. Head in fire-black porphyry. The god of panic fright.

CHAUGNAR'S COUSIN. Head in fire-black talc. Monster with trunk, related to Chaugnar Faugn.

BLUE GODDESS. Head in bluish-grey. Exotic-featured girl with hood.

THE GOBLIN. Head in talc. Elfin-featured being with fluted throat.

THE GOBLIN. Head in reddish porphyry. Somewhat more sinister than the previous figure of the same name. *Le rouge lutin* of Baudelaire's sonnet, *La Muse Malade*.

SWAMP-FEEDER. Statuette in fire-black talc. Fat monster with trunk and legs immersed in ooze.

THE FAMILIAR. Head in talc. Sorcerer's magistellus.

DRAGON. Head in fire-black talc. Combines features of man, fish and seal.

PEGASUS. Medallion in dolomite, suitable for wearing on cord.

PROSPERINE'S FLOWER. Medallion or lavalliere in hard talc, pierced for wearing.

THE SORCERER TRANSFORMED. Head in talc. Wizard who has undergone bestial transformation.

PROBOSCIDIAN OF THE PRIME. Statuette in porphyry. Obese monster with heavy wings and long proboscis.

THE MERMAID'S BUTLER. Head in porphyry. Semi-human, with gills and fish-like side-whiskers.

GARGOYLE OF AVEROIGNE. Head in talc.

WERE-JAGUAR. Head in talc.

CRUSTACEAN ENTITY. Head in talc.

ENTITY FROM ALGOL. Head in greenish porphyry. Indescribably-featured being.

BLACK INQUISITOR. Head in fire-black talc. Represents judicial sternness and implacability. Features elongated and formalized.

GENIUS OF GUATEMALA. Bust in reddish porphyry. Aboriginal head with immense ears.

ATLANTEAN SEA-GOD. Head in picrolite. Prehistoric precursor of Poseidon, with convoluted horns.

JOLLY GOD. Statuette in talc. Seated grotesque, obese, with huge ears and lips.

TSATHOGGUA. Relief carving in picrolite.

CAPPAPODE. Figurine in talc. Grotesque composed of head and foot.

DJIBBI-BIRD. Statuette in silver-grey porphyry. Wingless, armless creature in attitude of meditation. Described in *The Door to Saturn*.

PSYCHOANLYST. Head in fire-black porphyry. Prurient-looking monster with wrinkled brow and proboscis.

BLACK BEAST. Head in fire-black talc.

WARDEN OF THE DEAD. Head in bronze-green porphyry. Demoniac and implacable.

THE PURITAN. Head in talc. Horse-necked being with expression both morose and prurient.

JUNGLE ELDER. Bust in fire-black talc. Semi-simian bearded monster.

DEATH-GOD OF POSEIDONIS. Head in white porphyry, combining features of death's head and embryo.

SEER OF TWO WORLDS. Bust in picrolite. Being with four eyes, two open, two closed.

HYPERBOREAN SNAKE-EATER. Head in mottled talc, with tail of reptile issuing from mouth.

THE OUTSIDER. Head in talc. Depicting the cadaverous being of H. P. Lovecraft's story of the same name.

FLOWER-BRANCH LAVALLIERE. Medallion in hard talc, pierced for wearing.

MOON-GODDESS. Head in fire-black talc, surmounted by horned crescent.

SPAWN OF CTHULHU. Statuette in mottled talc. Monster with hooved fingered tentacles.

TREASURE GUARDIANS. Book-ends. Heads carved in deep relief on blocks of porphyry. One is a were-wolf, the other a dog-like demon.

OLD DEVIL. Head in rough, eroded sandstone. Conveys half-senile demonism.

HYPERBOREAN CAT-GODDESS. Bust in pinkish-white porphyry. Prehistoric prototype of Pasht.

BLACK FETISH. Head in fire-black talc. Negroid demon.

MAN-VULTURE. Figurine in bluish talc. Winged monster with brooding expression.

PREHUMAN GOD. Figurine in porphyry of contrasting colors. Outrageous grotesque from the brood of the Old Ones, with web-bearded face and arms growing from the back of the head.

ANCIENT GOD. Head in rough, time-eaten sandstone.

LEMURIAN GHOST. Head in fire-black talc. Suggests Easter Island sculptures.

THE GHOUL. Head in hard talc, in highly formalized style. Typifies the incisive, mordant forces of corruption and decay.

SENESCENT GHOUL. Head in fire-black talc. Hollow-eyed monster with gaping, toothless mouth.

OBSESSION. Bust in hard gray-black talc. Man with incubus-like monster surmounting his head and shoulders.

ST. ANTHONY. Head in talc heavily mottled with oxide. The hooded saint, bug-eyed with the vision of some new temptation.

TWO-FACED DEMON. Head in talc of two colors. Janus-like grotesque, having analogies with Tibetan masks.

THE LAMIA. Figurine in talc, designed for tray. Woman-headed reptile carved about the rim.

NIGHT-SPIRIT. Female head in black talc, in reclining position. Designed for paper-weight.

BEAST OF BURDEN. Figurine in grey-white porphyry. Crouching llama-like animal with basket on beak. Designed for tray.

MINOTAUR. Head in fire-black porphyry. Half-human, half-aurine. Skull hollowed for use as ash-tray.

THE SORCERER EIBON. Head in brown porphyry, with conical monster-carved hat.

THE EARTH DEMON. Head in fire-black talc.

INQUISITOR MORGHI. Bust in hard talc. The Inquisitor of *The Door to Saturn*.

THE PLANT-ANIMAL. Statuette in hard whitish talc. Armless, semi-anthropomorphic being in stoled robes.

GUARDIAN OF PRIMAL SECRETS. Head carved in deep relief on block of talc, fire-blackened. Depicts bat-eared monster.

SENTINEL OF THE SABBATH. Head in fire-black talc. Horned demon with open, bird-like beak.

TREASURE GUARDIAN. Head carved for book-end, from brownish porphyry. Wattled being, suggestive of both lizard and traditional pawnbroker figure.

DIORNIS. Head of archaic bird, in talc.

PREHISTORIC PUFFIN. Bird's head in brown lava, very rough and paleagean.

EARLY MEXICAN PIG-DOG. Figurine in hard talc. Semi-humorous grotesque.

DOG OF COMMORIOM. Relief head in talc. Semi-canine entity.

REPTILE-MAN. Half-length figurine in fire-black porphyry. Being of a lost reptile civilization with unknown characters incised on bosom.

PREHUMAN EMPEROR. Head in brown porphyry. Being of lost reptile race, with strange letters carved on head-dress.

HYPERBOREAN ORACLE-BIRD. Figurine in blue-gray porphyry. Pompous-looking avian creature.

LORD OF THE EIGHTH SPHERE. Figurine in bronze-colored porphyry. Monster with stumps for limbs.

THE HOUND OF TINDALOS. Head in brown sandstone. Stream-lined pursuing monster of the ultracosmic pits.

SATAN'S BORZOI. Statuette in fire-black porphyry. Creature suggesting union of dog, man, and monkey.

WARRIOR. Head in brown porphyry.

YOUNG BEHEMOTH. Figurine in talc. Obese infantile monster with abortive legs.

YOUNG ELEMENTAL. Figurine in talc. Being with frog-like head, probably a water-elemental.

THASAI DON Head in fire-black talc, with horned helmet. The arch-demon of Zothique.

ANTEHUMAN GROTESQUE. Half-length figurine in talc. Corpulent being with short arms. Vaguely suggests both man and hippopotamus.

WATCHER OF THE FEN. Statuette in reddish-brown porphyry. Prehistoric amphibian.

SELENITE. Head in fire-black talc.

TOMB-DWELLER. Statuette in kaolin, painted black and varnished. Winged and brooding entity. Symbolizes memory of the dead.

THE MANDRAKE. Statuette in greenish porphyry. Union of man and plant.

THE BLEMMYE. Statuette in brown talc. Being with head and body combined in one, described by Herodotus and Gustave Flaubert.

THE DRAGON'S EGG. Statuette in hard gray talc. Creature of the prime, holding in its lap a stolen dinosaur's egg.

ANTEDILUVIAN MOTHER. Half-length figurine in greenish porphyry. Creature both mammalian and reptilian.

NAMELESS ENTITY. Relief head in two-colored porphyry. Semi goat-like being, doubtless related to Shub-Niggurath.

GIRL'S HEAD FROM POMPEII. Hard talc. Has the look of ancient pottery.

EYELESS DEMON. Head in brownish talc. Crested with immense ears and empty eye-sockets.

GRAND DUKE OF HADES. Head in bronze-green porphyry. Medieval demon with knobbed skull and horn-like nose and chin.

WAR-DEMON. Head in fire-black talc. Expressive both of cruelty and stupidity.

THE HARPY. Figurine in talc. Winged feminine monster crouched on rock.

THE MOON-DWELLER. Alien head in bluish mottled talc.

UNICORN. Relief head on yellow porphyry.

THE FISH-EATER. Bust in mottled talc. Grotesque female with gaping mouth.

MARTIAN GOD. Half-length figurine in talc. Crested being with strange beard and two-fingered hands.

GARGOYLE. Head in hard talc. Malignant, semi-feline demon.

SATYR. Head in hard mottled talc.

- MNEMOSYNE. Book-end in rough brown sandstone. The Goddess of memory.
- KALILAH. Boy's head in hard gray talc, headdress mottled with brown. The prince of Beckford's *Third Episode of Vathek*.
- SABRE-TOOTHED NIGHTMARE. Monstrous head in greyish-white porphyry.
- FEMALE BLEMMYE. Statuette in brown porphyry.
- BIRD. Statuette in bluish talc with red mottlings.
- SCARAB LAVALLIERE. Relief-carving in two-colored porphyry. Pierced for wearing on a cord.
- BUTTERFLY LAVALLIERE. Relief carving in two-colored porphyry. Pierced for wearing on a cord.
- AURIGNACIENNE. Girl's head in low relief on rough piece of olive porphyry.
- EFT OF THE PRIME. Figurine in olive porphyry.
- BLACK PRINCESS. Head in fire-black talc. Girl with exotic headdress.
- ELDER GOD. Bust in mottled bluish talc. Long, equine-faced being with tentacles emerging from chin.
- PLANT-ANIMAL. Figurine in whitish talc. Curving and bent forward, with grotesque smi-batrachian features, six-legged.
- CTHULHU. Head in fire-black porphyry. Tentacled.

THE DREAM QUEST OF UNKNOWN KADATH

by H. P. Lovecraft

Part I

FOREWORD: The late, great Howard Phillips Lovecraft wrote a number of stories in a manner inspired by the early work of Lord Dunsany. These stories made a logical progression, from such pieces as **Celephais** and **The Cats of Ulthar** to **The White Whip** and **The Strange High House in the Mist**, and finally, the Randolph Carter tales, which included **The Unnamable**, **The Secret of Randolph Carter**, **The Silver Key**, **Through the Gates of the Silver Key**, and **The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath**.

It seems clear that Lovecraft identified himself with Carter, and that many of the Carter tales were derived from dreams Lovecraft had is made manifest in his letters, a selection of which is soon to be published. This loosely-constructed novel is perhaps the rarest of Lovecraft's longer works, since it was printed previously only in the limited edition of **BEYOND THE WALL OF SLEEP**, published in 1943. It was not published during Lovecraft's life-time, and indeed was all but lost after his death. Fortunately, R. H. Barlow had retained the manuscript pages and was able to supply Arkham House with the missing portions of the novel, and thus it came to be published. It is reprinted here because many followers of Lovecraft and admirers of his work were unable to obtain **BEYOND THE WALL OF SLEEP**.

The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath is not a major work of Lovecraft's, and it seems clearly evident that, had he lived longer, Lovecraft would have spent more time on a revision of this novel, which was left in first draft and, in the large part, not typewritten.

Three times Randolph Carter dreamed of the marvelous city, and three times was he snatched away while still he paused on the high terrace above it. All golden and lovely it blazed in the sunset, with walls, temples, colonnades and arched bridges of veined marble, silver-basined fountains of prismatic spray in broad squares and perfumed gardens, and wide streets marching between delicate trees and blossom-laden urns and ivory statues in gleaming rows; while on steep northward slopes climbed tiers of red roofs and old peaked gables harbouring little lanes of grassy cobbles. It was a fever of the gods, a fanfare of supernal trumpets and a clash of immortal symbols. Mystery hung about it as clouds about a fabulous unvisited mountain; and as Carter stood breathless and expectant on that balustraded parapet there swept

up to him the poignancy and suspense of almost-vanished memory, the pain of lost things and the maddening need to place again what once had been an awesome and momentous place.

He knew that for him its meaning must once have been supreme; though in what cycle or incarnation he had known it, or whether in dream or in waking, he could not tell. Vaguely it called up glimpses of a far forgotten first youth, when wonder and pleasure lay in all the mystery of days, and dawn and dusk alike strode forth prophetic to the eager sound of lutes and song, unclosing fiery gates toward further and surprising marvels. But each night as he stood on that high marble terrace with the curious urns and carven rail and looked off over that hushed sunset of beauty and unearthly immanence he felt the bondage of dream's tyrannous gods; for in no wise could he leave that lofty spot, or descend the wide marmoreal flights flung endlessly down to where those streets of elder witchery lay outspread and beckoning.

When for the third time he awakened with those flights still undescended and those hushed sunset streets still untraversed, he prayed long and earnestly to the hidden gods of dream that brood capricious above the clouds on unknown Kadath, in the cold waste where no man treads. But the gods made no answer and shewed no relenting, nor did they give any favouring sign when he prayed to them in dream, and invoked them sacrificially through the bearded priests of Nasht and Kaman-Thah, whose cavern-temple with its pillar of flame lies not far from the gates of the waking world. It seemed, however, that his prayers must have been adversely heard, for after even the first of them he ceased wholly to behold the marvelous city; as if his three glimpses from afar had been mere accidents or over-sights, and against some hidden plan or wish of the gods.

At length, sick with longing for those glittering sunset streets and cryptical hill lanes among ancient tiled roofs, nor able sleeping or waking to drive them from his mind, Carter resolved to go with bold entreaty whither no man had gone before, and dare the icy deserts through the dark to where unknown Kadath, veiled in cloud and crowned with unimagined stars, holds secret and nocturnal the onyx castle of the Great Ones.

In light slumber he descended the seventy steps to the cavern of flame and talked of this design to the bearded priests Nasht and Kaman-Thah. And the priests shook their pshent-bearing heads and vowed it would be the death of his soul. They pointed

out that the Great Ones had shewn already their wish, and that it is not agreeable to them to be harassed by insistent pleas. They reminded him, too, that not only had no man ever been to Kadath, but no man had ever suspected in what part of space it may lie; whether it be in the dreamlands around our own world, or in those surrounding some unguessed companion of Fomalhaut or Aldebaran. If in our dreamland, it might conceivably be reached, but only three fully human souls since time began had ever crossed and recrossed the black impious gulfs to other dreamlands, and of that three two had come back quite mad. There were, in such voyages, incalculable local dangers; as well as that shocking final peril which gibbers unmentionably outside the ordered universe, where no dreams reach; that last amorphous blight of nethermost confusion which blasphemes and bubbles at the centre of all infinity — the boundless daemon sultan Azathoth, whose name no lips dare speak aloud, and who gnaws hungrily in inconceivable, unlighted chambers beyond time amidst the muffled, maddening beating of vile drums and the thin, monotonous whine of accursed flutes; to which detestable pounding and piping dance slowly, awkwardly, and absurdly the gigantic Ultimate Gods, the blind, voiceless, tenebrous, mindless Other Gods whose soul and messenger is the crawling chaos Nyarlathotep.

Of these things was Carter warned by the priests Nasht and Kaman-Thah in the cavern of flame, but still he resolved to find the gods on unknown Kadath in the cold waste, whatever that might be, and to win from them the sight and remembrance and shelter of the marvelous sunset city. He knew that his journey would be strange and long, and that the Great Ones would be against it; but, being old in the land of dream, he counted on many useful memories and devices to aid him. So, asking a formal blessing of the priests and thinking shrewdly on his course, he boldly descended the seven hundred steps to the Gate of Deeper Slumber and set out through the Enchanted Wood.

In the tunnels of that twisted wood, whose low prodigious oaks twine groping boughs and shine dim with the phosphorescence of fragrant fungi, dwell the furtive and secretive Zoogs; who know many obscure secrets of the dream world and a few of the waking world, since the wood at two places touches the lands of men, though it would be disastrous to say where. Certain unexplained rumours, events, and vanishments occur among men where the Zoogs have access, and it is well that they cannot travel far out-

side the world of dream. But over the nearer parts of the dream world they pass freely, flitting small and brown and unseen and bearing back piquant tales to beguile the hours around their hearths in the forest they love. Most of them live in burrows, but some inhabit the trunks of the great trees; and although they live mostly on fungi it is muttered that they have also a slight taste for meat, either physical or spiritual, for certainly many dreamers have entered that wood who have not come out. Carter, however, had no fear; for he was an old dreamer and had learnt their fluttering language and made many a treaty with them; having found through their help the splendid city of Celephais in Ooth-Nargai beyond the Tanarian Hills, where reigns half the year the great King Kuranos, a man he had known by another name in life. Kuranos was the one soul who had been to the star-gulfs and returned free from madness.

Threading now the low phosphorescent aisles between those gigantic trunks, Carter made fluttering sounds in the manner of the Zoogs, and listened now and then for responses. He remembered one particular village of the creatures was in the centre of older and more terrible dwellers long forgotten, and toward this spot he hastened. He traced his way by the grotesque fungi, which always seem better nourished as one approaches the dread circle where elder beings danced and sacrificed. Finally the great light of those thicker fungi revealed a sinister green and grey vastness pushing up through the roof of the forest and out of sight. This was the nearest of the great ring of stones, and Carter knew he was close to the Zoog village. Renewing his fluttering sound, he waited patiently; and was at last rewarded by an impression of many eyes watching him. It was the Zoogs, for one sees their weird eyes long before one can discern their small, slippery brown outlines.

Out they swarmed, from hidden burrow and honeycombed tree, till the whole dimly-lit region was alive with them. Some of the wilder ones brushed Carter unpleasantly, and one even nipped loathsomely at his elders; but these lawless spirits were soon restrained by their elders. The Council of Sages, recognizing the visitor, offered a gourd of fermented sap from a haunted tree unlike the others, which had grown from a seed dropt down by someone on the moon; and as Carter drank it ceremoniously a very strange colloquy began. The Zoogs did not, unfortunately know where the peak of Kadath lies, nor could they even say whether

the cold waste is in our dream world or in another. Rumours of the Great Ones came equally from all points; and one might only say that they were likelier to be seen on high mountain peaks than in valleys, since on such peaks they dance reminiscently when the moon is above and the clouds beneath.

Then one very ancient Zoog recalled a thing unheard-of by the others; and said that in Ulthar, beyond the River Skai, there still lingered the last copy of those inconceivably old *Pnakotic Manuscripts* made by walking men in forgotten boreal kingdoms and borne into the land of dreams when the hairy cannibal Gnophkehs overcame many templed-Olathoe and slew all the heroes of the land of Lomar. Those manuscripts he said, told much of the gods, and besides, in Ulthar there were men who had seen the signs of the gods, and even one old priest who had scaled a great mountain to behold them dancing by moonlight. He had failed, though his companion had succeeded and perished namelessly.

So Randolph Carter thanked the Zoogs, who fluttered amicably and gave him another gourd of moon-tree wine to take with him, and set out through the phosphorescent wood for the other side, where the rushing Skai flows down from the slopes of Lerion, and Hatheg and Nir and Ulthar dot the plain. Behind him, furtive and unseen, crept several of the curious Zoogs; for they wished to learn what might befall him, and bear back the legend to their people. The vast oaks grew thicker as he pushed on beyond the village, and he looked sharply for a certain spot where they would thin somewhat, standing quite dead or dying among the unnaturally dense fungi and the rotting mould and mushy logs of their fallen brothers. There he would turn sharply aside, for at that spot a mighty slab of stone rests on the forest floor; and those who have dared approach it say that it bears an iron ring three feet wide. Remembering the archaic circle of great mossy rocks, and what it was possibly set up for, the Zoogs do not pause near that expansive slab with its huge ring; for they realize that all which is forgotten need not necessarily be dead, and they would not like to see the slab rise slowly and deliberately.

Carter detoured at the proper place, and heard behind him the frightened fluttering of some of the more timid Zoogs. He had known they would follow him, so he was not disturbed; for one grows accustomed to the anomalies of these prying creatures. It was twilight when he came to the edge of the wood, and the strengthening glow told him it was the twilight of

morning. Over fertile plains rolling down to the Skai he saw the smoke of the cottage chimneys, and on every hand were the hedges and ploughed fields and thatched roofs of a peaceful land. Once he stopped at a farmhouse well for a cup of water, and all the dogs barked affrightedly at the inconspicuous Zoogs that crept through the grass behind. At another house, where people were stirring, he asked questions about the gods, and whether they danced often upon Lerion; but the farmer and his wife could only make the Elder Sign and tell him the way to Nir and Ulthar.

At noon he walked through the one broad high street of Nir, which he had once visited and which marked his farthest former travels in this direction; and soon afterward he came to the great stone bridge across the Skai, into whose central piece the masons had sealed a human sacrifice when they built it thirteen-hundred years before. Once on the other side, the frequent presence of cats (who all arched their backs at the trailing Zoogs) revealed the near neighborhood of Ulthar; for in Ulthar, according to an ancient and significant law, no man may kill a cat. Very pleasant were the suburbs of Ulthar, with their little green cottages and neatly fenced farms; and still pleasanter was the quaint town itself, with its old peaked roofs and overhanging upper stories and numberless chimney-pots and narrow hill streets where one can see old cobbles whenever the graceful cats afford space enough. Carter, the cats being somewhat dispersed by the half-seen Zoogs, picked his way directly to the modest Temple of the Elder Ones where priests and old records were said to be; and once within that venerable circular tower of ivied stone—which crowns Ulthar's highest hill—he sought out the patriarch Atal, who had been up the forbidden peak Hatheg-Kla in the stony desert and had come down again alive.

Atal, seated on an ivory dais in a festooned shrine at the top of the temple, was fully three centuries old; but still very keen of mind and memory. From him Carter learned many things about the gods, but mainly that they are indeed only Earth's gods, ruling feebly our own dreamland and having no power or habitation elsewhere. They might, Atal said, heed a man's prayer if in good humour; but one must not think of climbing to their onyx stronghold atop Kadath in the cold waste. It was lucky that no man knew where Kadath towers, for the fruits of ascending it would be very grave. Atal's companion, Barzai the

Wise, had been drawn screaming into the sky for climbing merely the known peak of Hatheg-Kla. With unknown Kadath, if ever found, matters would be much worse; for although Earth's gods may sometimes be surpassed by a wise mortal, they are protected by the Other Gods from Outside, whom it is better not to discuss. At least twice in the world's history the Other Gods set their seal upon Earth's primal granite; once in antediluvian times, as guessed from a drawing in those parts of the *Pnakotic Manuscripts* too ancient to be read, and once on Hatheg-Kla when Barzai the Wise tried to see Earth's gods dancing by moonlight. So, Atal said, it would be much better to let all gods alone except in tactful prayers.

Carter, though disappointed by Atal's discouraging advice and by the meagre help to be found in the *Pnakotic Manuscripts* and the *Seven Cryptical Books of Hsan*, did not wholly despair. First he questioned the old priest about that marvelous sunset city seen from the railed terrace, thinking that perhaps he might find it without the god's aid; but Atal could tell him nothing. Probably, Atal said, the place belonged to his especial dream world and not to the general land of vision that many know; and conceivably it might be on another planet. In that case Earth's gods could not guide him if they would. But this was not likely, since the stopping of the dreams shewed pretty clearly that it was something the Great Ones wished to hide from him.

The Carter did a wicked thing, offering his guileless host so many draughts of the moon-wine which the Zoogs had given him that the old man became irresponsibly talkative. Robbed of his reserve, poor Atal babbled freely of forbidden things; telling of a great image reported by travellers as carved on the solid rock of the mountain Ngranek, on the isle of Oriab in the Southern Sea, and hinting that it may be a likeness which earth's gods once wrought of their own features in the days when they danced by moonlight on that mountain. And he hiccupped likewise that the features of that image are very strange, so that one might easily recognize them, and that they are sure signs of the authentic race of the gods.

Now the use of all this in finding the gods became at once apparent to Carter. It is known that in disguise the younger among the Great Ones often espouse the daughters of men, so that around the borders of the cold waste wherein stands Kadath the peasants must all bear their blood. This being so, the way

to find that waste must be to see the stone face on Ngranck and mark the features; then, having noted them with care, to search for such featured among living men. Where they are plainest and thickest, there must the gods dwell nearest; and whatever stony waste lies back of the villages in that place must be that wherein stands Kadath.

Much of the Great Ones might be learnt in such regions, and those with their blood might inherit little memories very useful to a seeker. They might not know their parentage, for the gods so dislike to be known among men that none can be found who has seen their faces wittingly; a thing which Carter realised even as he sought to scale Kadath. But they would have queer lofty thoughts misunderstood by their fellows, and would sing of far places and gardens so unlike any known even in the dreamland that common folk would call them fools; and from all this one could perhaps learn old secrets of Kadath, or gain hints of the marvellous sunset city which the gods held secret. And more, one might in certain cases seize some well-loved child of a god as hostage; or even capture some young god himself, disguised and dwelling amongst men with a comely peasant maiden as his bride.

Atal, however, did not know how to find Ngranek on its isle of Oriab; and recommended that Carter follow the singing Skai under its bridges down to the Southern Sea; where no burgess of Ulthar has ever been, but whence the merchants come in boats or with long caravans of mules and two-wheeled carts. There is a great city there, Dylath-Leen, but in Ulthar its reputation is bad because of the black three-banked galleys that sail to it with rubies from no clearly named shore. The traders that come from those galleys to deal with the jewellers are human, or nearly so, but the rowers are never beheld; and it is not thought wholesome in Ulthar that merchants should trade with black ships from unknown places whose rowers cannot be exhibited.

By the time he had given this information Atal was very drowsy, and Carter laid him gently on a couch of inlaid ebony and gathered his long beard decorously on his chest. As he turned to go, he observed that no suppressing fluttering followed him, and wondered why the Zoogs had become so lax in their curious pursuit. Then he noticed all the sleek complacent cats of Ulthar licking their chops with unusual gusto, and recalled the spitting and caterwauling he had faintly heard, in lower parts of the temple, while absorbed in the old pirst's conversation. He re-

called, too, the evilly hungry way in which an especially impudent young Zoog had regarded a small black kitten in the cobbled street outside. And because he loved nothing on earth more than small kittens, he stooped and petted the sleek cats of Ulthar as they licked their chops, and did not mourn because those inquisitive Zoogs would escort him no farther.

It was sunset now, so Carter stopped at an ancient inn on a steep little street overlooking the lower town. And as he went out on the balcony of his room and gazed down at the sea of red tiled roofs and cobbled ways and the pleasant fields beyond, all mellow and magical in the slanted light, he swore that Ulthar would be a very likely place to dwell in always, were not the memory of a greater sunset city ever goading one onward toward unknown perils. Then twilight fell, and the pink walls of the plastered gables turned violet and mystic, and little yellow lights floated up one by one from old lattice windows. And sweet bells pealed in the temple tower above, and the first star winked softly above the meadows across the Skai. With the night came song, and Carter nodded as the lutanists praised ancient ancient days from beyond the filigreed balconies and tessellated courts of simple Ulthar. And there might have been sweetness even in the voices of Ulthar's many cats, but that they were mostly heavy and silent from strange feasting. Some of them stole off to those cryptical realms, which are known only to cats and which villagers say are on the moon's dark side, whither the cats leap from tall housetops, but one small black kitten crept upstairs and sprang into Carter's lap to purr and play, and curled up near his feet when he lay down at last on the little couch whose pillows were stuffed with fragrant drowsy herbs.

In the morning Carter joined a caravan of merchants bound for Dylath-Leen with the spun wool of Ulthar and the cabbages of Ulthar's busy farms. And for six days they rode with tinkling bells on the smooth road beside the Skai; stopping some nights at the inns of little fishing towns, and on other nights camping under the stars while snatches of boatmen's songs came from the placid river. The country was very beautiful, with green hedges and groves and picturesque peaked cottages and octagonal windmills.

On the seventh day a blur of smoke rose on the horizon ahead, and then the tall black towers of Dylath-Leen, which is built mostly of basalt. Dylath-Leen with its thin angular towers looks

in the distance like a bit of the Giant's Causeway, and its streets are dark and uninviting. There are many dismal sea-taverns near the myriad wharves, and all the town is thronged with the strange seamen of every land on earth and of a few which are said to be not on earth. Carter questioned the oddly robed men of that city about the peak of Ngranek on the isle of Oriab, and found that they knew of it well. Ships came from Baharna on that island, one being due to return thither in only a month, and Ngranek is but two days' zebra-ride from that port. But few had seen the stone face of the god, because it is on a very difficult side of Ngranek, which overlooks only sheer crags and a valley of sinister lava. Once the gods were angered with men on that side, and spoke of the matter to the Other Gods.

It was hard to get this information from the traders and sailors in Dylath-Leetn's sea taverns, because they mostly preferred to whisper of the black galleys. One of them was due in a week with rubies from its unknown shore, and the townsfolk dreaded to see it dock. The mouths of the men who came from it to trade were too wide, and the way their turbans were humped up in two points above their foreheads was especially in bad taste. And their shoes were the shortest and queerest ever seen in the Six Kingdoms. But worst of all was the matter of the unseen rowers. Those three banks of oars moved too briskly and accurately and vigorously to be comfortable, and it was not right for a ship to stay in port for weeks while the merchants traded, yet to give no glimpse of its crew. It was not fair to the tavern-keepers of Dylath-Leen, or to the grocers and butchers, either; for not a scrap of provisions was ever sent aboard. The merchants took only gold and stout black slaves from Parg across the river. That was all they ever took, those unpleasantly featured merchants and their unseen rowers; never anything from the butchers and grocers, but only gold and the fat black men of Parg whom they bought by the pound. And the odours from those galleys which the south wind blew in from the wharves are not to be described. Only by constantly smoking strong thagweed could even the hardest denizens of the old sea-taverns bear them. Dylath-Leen would never have tolerated the black galleys had such rubies been obtainable elsewhere, but no mine in all earth's dreamland was known to produce their like.

Of these things Dylath-Leen's cosmopolitan folk gossiped whilst Carter waited patiently for the ship from Baharna, which might

bear him to the isle whereon carven Nganek towers lofty and barren. Meanwhile he did not fail to seek through the haunts of far travellers for any tales they might have concerning Kadath in the cold waste or a marvellous city of marble walls and silver fountains seen below terraces in the sunset. Of these things, however, he learned nothing; though he once thought that a certain old slant-eyed merchant looked queerly intelligent when the cold waste was spoken of. This man was reputed to trade with the horrible stone villages on the icy desert plateau of Leng, which no healthy folk visit and whose evil fires are seen at night from afar. He was even rumored to have dealt with that high-priest not to be described, which wears a yellow silken mask over its face and dwells alone in a prehistoric stone monastery. That such a person might well have had nibbling traffick with such beings as may conceivably dwell in the cold waste was not to be doubted, but Carter soon found that it was no use questioning him.

Then the black galley slipped into the harbour past the basalt wale and the tall lighthouse, silent and alien, and with a strange stench that the south wind drove into the town. Uneasiness rustled through the taverns along that waterfront, and after a while the dark wide-mouthed merchants with humped turbans and short feet clumped stealthily ashore to seek the bazaars of the jewelers. Carter observed them closely, and disliked them more the longer he looked at them. Then he saw them drive the stout black men of Parg up the gang plank grunting and sweating into that singular galley, and wondered in what lands—or if in any lands at all—those far pathetic creatures might be destined to serve.

And on the third evening of that galley's stay one of the uncomfortable merchants spoke to him, smirking sinfully and hinting of what he had heard in the taverns of Carter's quest. He appeared to have knowledge too secret for public telling; and although the sound of his voice was unbearably hateful, Carter felt that the lore of so far a traveller must not be overlooked. He bade him therefore be his guest in locked chambers above, and drew out the last of the Zoog's moonwine to loosen his tongue. The strange merchant drank heavily, but smirked unchanged by the draught. Then he drew forth a curious bottle with wine of his own, and Carter saw that the bottle was a single hollowed ruby, grotesquely carved in patterns too fabulous to be comprehended. He offered his wine to his host, and though Car-

ter took only the least sip, he felt the dizziness of space and the fever of unimagined jungles. All the while the guest had been smiling more and more broadly, and as Carter slipped into blankness the last thing he knew was that dark odious face convulsed with evil laughter and something quite unspeakable where one of the two frontal puffs of that orange turban had become disarranged with the shakings of that epileptic mirth.

Carter next had consciousness amidst horrible odours beneath a tent-like awning on the deck of a ship, with the marvellous coasts of the Southern Sea flying by in unnatural swiftness. He was not chained, but three of the dark sardonic merchants stood grinning nearby, and the sight of those humps in their turbans made him almost as faint as did the stench that filtered up through the sinister hatches. He saw slip past him the glorious lands and cities of which a fellow-dreamer of earth—a lighthouse-keeper in ancient Kingsport—had often discoursed in the old days, and recognized the templed terraces of Zak, abode of forgotten dreams; the spires of infamous Thalarion, the daemon-city of a thousand wonders where the eidola Lathi reigns; the charnel gardens of Zura, land of pleasures unattained, and the twin headlands of crystal, meeting above in a resplendent arch, which guard the harbour of Sona-Nyl, blessed land of fancy.

Past all these gorgeous lands the malodourous ship flew unwholesomely, urged by the abnormal strokes of those rowers below. And before the day was done Carter saw that the steersman could have no other goal than the Basalt Pillars of the West, beyond which simple folk say Cathuria lies, but which wise dreamers well know are the gates of a monstrous cataract wherein the oceans of earth's dreamland drop wholly to abysmal nothingness and shoot through the empty spaces toward other worlds and other stars and the awful voids outside the ordered universe where the daemon-sultan Azathoth gnaws hungrily in chaos amid pounding and piping and the hellish dancing of the Other Gods, blind, voiceless, tenebrous, and mindless, with their soul and messenger, Nyarlathotep.

Meanwhile the three sardonic merchants would give no word of their intent, though Carter well knew that they must be leagued with those who wished to hold him from his quest. It is understood in the land of dream that the Other Gods have many agents moving among men; and all these agents, whether wholly human or slightly less than human, are eager to work the will of

those blind and mindless things in return for the favour of their hideous soul and messenger, the crawling chaos, Nyarlathotep. So Carter inferred that the merchants of the humped turbans, hearing of his daring search for the Great Ones in their castle of Kadath, had decided to take him away and deliver him to Nyarlathotep for whatever nameless bounty might be offered for such a prize. What might be the land of those merchants, in our known universe or in the eldritch spaces outside, Carter could not guess; nor could he imagine at what hellish trysting place they would meet the crawling chaos to give him up and claim their reward. He knew, however, that no beings as nearly human as these would dare approach the ultimate nighted throne of the daemon Azathoth in the formless central void.

At the set of sun the merchants licked their excessively wide lips and glared hungrily and one of them went below and returned from some hidden and offensive cabin with a pot and basket of plates. Then they squatted close together beneath the awning and ate the smoking meat that was passed around. But when they gave Carter a portion, he found something very terrible in the size and shape of it; so that he turned even paler than before and cast that portion into the sea when no eye was on him. And again he thought of those unseen rowers beneath, and of the suspicious nourishment from which their far too mechanical strength was derived.

It was dark when the galley passed betwixt the Basalt Pillars of the West and the sound of the ultimate cataract swelled portentous from ahead. And the spray of that cataract rose to obscure the stars, and the deck grew damp, and the vessel reeled in the surging current of the brink. Then with a queer whistle and plunge the leap was taken, and Carter felt the terrors of nightmare as earth fell away and the great boat shot silent and comet-like into planetary space. Never before had he known what shapeless black things lurk and caper and flounder all through the ether, leering and grinning at such voyagers as may pass, and sometimes feeling about with slimy paws when some moving object excites their curiosity. These are the nameless larvae of the Other Gods, and like them are blind and without mind, and possessed of singular hungers and thirsts.

But that offensive galley did not aim as far as Carter had feared, for he soon saw that the helmsman was steering a course directly for the moon. The moon was a crescent shining larger and

larger as they approached it, and shewing its singular craters and peaks uncomfortably. The ship made for the edge, and it soon became clear that its destination was that secret and mysterious side which is always turned away from the earth, and which no fully human person, save perhaps the dreamer Snireth-Ko, has ever beheld. The close aspect of the moon as the galley drew near proved very disturbing to Carter, and he did not like the size and shape of the ruins which crumbled here and there. The dead temples on the mountains were so placed that they could have glorified no suitable or wholesome gods, and in the symmetries of the broken columns there seemed to be some dark and inner meaning which did not invite solution. And what the structure and proportions of the olden worshippers could have been, Carter steadily refused to conjecture.

When the ship rounded the edge, and sailed over those lands unseen by man, there appeared in the queer landscape certain signs of life, and Carter saw many low, broad, round cottages in fields of grotesque whitish fungi. He noticed that these cottages had no windows, and thought that their shape suggested the huts of Esquimaux. Then he glimpsed the oily waves of a sluggish sea, and knew that the voyage was once more to be by water—or at least through some liquid. The galley struck the surface with a peculiar sound, and the odd elastic way the waves received it was very perplexing to Carter. They now slid along at great speed, once passing and hailing another galley of kindred form, but generally seeing nothing but that curious sea and a sky that was black and star-strewn even though the sun shone scorchingly in it.

There presently rose ahead the jagged hills of a leprous-looking coast, and Carter saw the thick unpleasant gray towers of a city. The way they leaned and bent, the manner in which they were clustered, and the fact that they had no windows at all, was very disturbing to the prisoner; and he bitterly mourned the folly which had made him sip the curious wine of that merchant with the humped turban. As the coast drew nearer, and the hideous stench of that city grew stronger, he saw upon the jagged hills many forests, some of whose trees he recognized as akin to that solitary moon-tree in the enchanted wood of earth, from whose sap the small brown Zoogs ferment their curious wine.

Carter could now distinguish moving figures on the noisome wharves ahead, and the better he saw them the worse he began

to fear and detest them. For they were not men at all, or even approximately men, but great greyish-white slippery things which could expand and contract at will, and whose principal shape—though it often changed—was that of a sort of toad without any eyes, but with a curious vibrating mass of short pink tentacles on the end of its blunt, vague snout. These objects were waddling busily about the wharves, moving bales and crates and boxes with preternatural strength, and now and then hopping on or off some anchored galley with long oars in their forepaws. And now and then one would appear driving a herd of clumping slaves, which indeed were approximate human beings with wide mouths like those merchants who traded in Dylath-Leen; only these herds, being without turbans or shoes or clothing, did not seem so very human after all. Some of the slaves—the fatter ones, whom a sort of overseer would pinch experimentally—were unloaded from ships and nailed in crates which workers pushed into the low warehouses or loaded on great lumbering vans.

Once a van was hitched and driven off, and the fabulous thing which drew it was such that Carter gasped, even after having seen the other monstrosities of that hateful place. Now and then a small herd of slaves, dressed and turbaned like the dark merchants, would be driven aboard a galley, followed by a great crew of the slippery toad-things as officers, navigators, and rowers. And Carter saw that the almost-human creatures were reserved for the more ignominious kinds of servitude which required no strength, such as steering and cooking, fetching and carrying, and bargaining with men on the earth or other planets where they traded. These creatures must have been convenient on earth, for they were truly not unlike men when dressed and carefully shod and turbaned, and could haggle in the shops of men without embarrassment or curious explanations. But most of them, unless lean or ill-favoured, were unclothed and packed in crates and drawn off in lumbering lorries by fabulous things. Occasionally other beings were unloaded and crated; some very like these semi-humans, some not so similar, and some not similar at all. And he wondered if any of the poor stout black men of Parg were left to be unloaded and crated and shipped inland in those obnoxious drays.

When the galley landed at a greasy-looking quay of spongy rock, a nightmare horde of toad-things wriggled out of the

hatches, and two of them seized Carter and dragged him ashore. The smell and aspect of that city are beyond telling, and Carter held only scattered images of the tiled streets and black doorways and endless precipices of grey vertical walls without windows. At length he was dragged within a low doorway and made to climb infinite steps in pitch blackness. It was, apparently, all one to the toad-things whether it were light or dark. The odour of the place was intolerable, and when Carter was locked into a chamber and left alone he scarcely had strength to crawl around and ascertain its form and dimensions. It was circular, and about twenty feet across.

From then on time ceased to exist. At intervals food was pushed in, but Carter would not touch it. What his fate would be he did not know; but he felt that he was held for the coming of that frightful soul and messenger of infinity's Other Gods, the crawling chaos, Nyarlathotep. Finally, after an unguessed span of hours or days, the great stone door swung wide again, and Carter was shoved down the stairs and out into the red-litten streets of that fearsome city. It was night on the moon, and all through the town were stationed slaves bearing torches.

In a detestable square a sort of procession was formed; ten of the toad-things and twenty-four almost human torch-bearers, eleven on either side, and one each before and behind. Carter was placed in the middle of the line; five toad-things ahead and five behind, and one almost-human torch-bearer on either side of him. Certain of the toad-things produced disgustingly carven flutes of ivory and made loathsome sounds. To that hellish piping the column advanced out of the tiled streets and into nighted plains of obscene fungi, soon commencing to climb one of the lower and more gradual hills that lay behind the city. That on some frightful slope or blasphemous plateau the crawling chaos waited, Carter could not doubt; and he wished that the suspense might soon be over. The whining of those impious flutes was shocking, and he would have given worlds for some even half-normal sound; but these toad-things had no voices, and the slaves did not talk.

Then through that star-specked darkness there did come a normal sound. It rolled from the higher hills and, from all the jagged peaks around, it was caught up and echoed in a swelling pandaemoniac chorus. It was the midnight yell of the cat, and Carter knew at last that the old village folk were right

when they made low guesses about the cryptical realms which are known only to cats, and to which the elders among cats repair by stealth nocturnally, springing from high housetops. Verily, it is to the moon's dark side that they go to leap and gambol on the hills and converse with ancient shadows, and here amidst that column of foetid things Carter heard their homely, friendly cry, and thought of the steep roofs and warm hearths and little lighted windows of home.

Now much of the speech of cats was known to Randolph Carter, and in this far terrible place he uttered the cry that was suitable. But that he need not have done, for even as his lips opened he heard the chorus wax and draw nearer, and saw swift shadows against the stars as small graceful shapes leaped from hill to hill in gathering legions. The call of the clan had been given, and before the foul procession had time even to be frightened a cloud of smothering fur and a phalanx of murderous claws were tidally and tempestuously upon it. The flutes stopped, and there were shrieks in the night. Dying almost-humans screamed, and cats spit and yowled and roared, but the toad-things made never a sound as their stinking green ichor oozed fatally upon that porous earth with the obscene fungi.

It was a stupendous sight while the torches lasted, and Carter had never before seen so many cats. Black, grey, and white; yellow, tiger, and mixed; common, Persian, and Manx, Thibetan, Angora, and Egyptian; all there in the fury of battle, and there hovered over them some trace of that profound and inviolate sanctity which made their goddess great in the temples of Bubastis. They would leap seven strong at the throat of an almost-human or the pink tenacled snout of the toad-thing and drag it down savagely to the fungous plain, where myriads of their fellows would surge over it and into it with frenzied claws and teeth of a divine battle-fury. Carter had seized a torch from a stricken slave, but was soon overborne by the surging waves of his loyal defenders. Then he lay in the utter blackness hearing the clangour of war and the shouts of the victors, and feeling the soft paws of his friends as they rushed to and fro over him in the fray.

At last awe and exhaustion closed his eyes, and when he opened them again it was upon a strange scene. The great shining disc of the earth, thirteen times greater than that of the moon as we see it, had risen with floods of weird light over the

lunar landscape; and across all those leagues of wild plateau and ragged crest there squatted one endless sea of cats in orderly array. Circle on circle they reached, and two or three leaders out of the ranks were licking his face and purring to him consolingly. Of the dead slaves and toad-things there were not many signs, but Carter thought he saw one bone a little way off in the open space between him and the warriors.

Carter now spoke with the leaders in the soft language of cats, and learned that his ancient friendship with the species was well known and often spoken of in the places where cats congregate. He had not been unmarked in Ulthar when he passed through, and the sleek old cats had remembered how he petted them after they had attended to the hungry Zoogs who looked evilly at a small black kitten. And they recalled, too, how he had welcomed the very little kitten who came to see him at the inn, and how he had given it a saucer of rich cream in the morning before he left. The grandfather of that very kitten was the leader of the army now assembled, for he had seen the evil procession from a far hill and recognized the prisoner as a sworn friend of his kind on earth and in the land of dream.

A yowl now came from a farther peak, and the old leader paused abruptly in his conversation. It was one of the army's outposts, stationed on the highest of the mountains to watch the one foe which Earth's cats fear; the very large and peculiar cats from Saturn, who for some reason have not been oblivious of the charm of our moon's dark side. They are leagued by treaty with the evil toad-things, and are notoriously hostile to our earthly cats; so that at this juncture a meeting would have been a somewhat grave matter.

After a brief consultation of generals, the cats rose and assumed a closer formation, crowding protectingly around Carter and preparing to take the great leap through space back to the housetops of our earth and its dreamland. The old field-marshal advised Carter to let himself be borne along smoothly and passively in the massed ranks of furry leapers, and told him how to spring when the rest sprang and land gracefully when the rest landed. He also offered to deposit him in any spot he desired, and Carter decided on the city of Dylath-Leen whence the black galley had set out; for he wished to sail thence for Oriab and the carven crest Ngranek, and also to warn the people of the city to have no more traffick with black galleys, if indeed that traffick could be tactfully and judiciously broken off. Then, upon a sig-

nal, the cats all leaped gracefully with their friend packed securely in their midst; while in a black cave on an unhallowed summit of the moon-mountains still vainly waited the crawling chaos, Nyarlathotep.

The leap of the cats through space was very swift; and being surrounded by his companions Carter did not see this time the great black shapelessnesses that lurk and caper and flounder in the abyss. Before he fully realized what had happened he was back in his familiar room at the inn at Dylath-Leen, and the stealthy, friendly cats were pouring out of the window in streams. The old leader from Ulthar was the last to leave, and as Carter shook his paw he said he would be able to get home by cockcrow. When dawn came, Carter went downstairs and learned that a week had elapsed since his capture and leaving. There was still nearly a fortnight to wait for the ship bound toward Oriab, and during that time he said what he could against the black galleys and their infamous ways. Most of the townsfolk believed him; yet so fond were the jewellers of great rubies that none would wholly promise to cease trafficking with the wide-mouthed merchants. If aught of evil ever befalls Dylath-Leen through such traffick, it will not be his fault.

In about a week the desiderate ship put in by the black wale and tall lighthouse, and Carter was glad to see that she was a barque of wholesome men, with painted sides and yellow lateen sails and gray captain in silken robes. Her cargo was the fragrant resin of Oriab's inner groves, and the delicate pottery baked by the artists of Baharna, and the strange little figures carved from Ngranek's ancient lava. For this they were paid in the wool of Ulthar and the iridescent textiles of Hatheg and the ivory that the black men carve across the river in Parg. Carter made arrangements with the captain to go to Baharna and was told that the voyage would take ten days. And during his week of waiting he talked much with that captain of Ngranek, and was told that very few had seen the carved face thereon; but that most travellers are content to learn its legends from old people and lava-gatherers and image-makers in Baharna and afterward say in their far homes that they have indeed beheld it. The captain was not even sure that any person now living had beheld that carved face, for the wrong side of Ngranek is very difficult and barren and sinister, and there are rumours of caves near the peak wherein dwell the night-gaunts. But the captain did not wish

to say just what a night-gaunt might be like, since such cattle are known to haunt most persistently the dreams of those who think too often of them. Then Carter asked that captain about unknown Kadath in the cold waste, and the marvellous sunset city, but of these the good man could truly tell nothing.

Carter sailed out of Dylath-Leen one early morning when the tide turned, and saw the first rays of sunrise on the thin angular towers of that dismal basalt town. And for two days they sailed eastward in sight of green coasts, and saw often the pleasant fishing towns that climbed up steeply with their red roofs and chimney-pots from old dreaming wharves and beaches where nets lay drying. But on the third day they turned sharply south where the roll of the water was stronger, and soon passed from sight of any land. On that fifth day the sailors were nervous, but the captain apologized for their fears, saying that the ship was about to pass over the weedy walls and broken columns of a sunken city too old for memory, and that when the water was clear one could see so many moving shadows in that deep place that simple folks disliked it. He admitted, moreover, that many ships had been lost in that part of the sea; having been hailed when quite close to it, but never seen again.

That night the moon was very bright, and one could see a great way down in the water. There was so little wind that the ship could not move much, and the ocean was very calm. Looking over the rail Carter saw many fathoms deep the dome of a great temple, and in front of it an avenue of unnatural sphinxes leading to what was once a public square. Dolphins sported merrily in and out of the ruins, and porpoises revelled clumsily here and there, sometimes coming to the surface and leaping clear out of the sea. As the ship drifted on a little, the floor of the ocean rose in hills, and one could clearly mark the lines of ancient climbing streets and the washed-down walls of myriad little houses.

Then the suburbs appeared, and finally a great lone building on a hill, of simpler architecture than the other structures, and in much better repair. It was dark and low and covered four sides of a square, with a tower at each corner, a paved court in the centre, and small curious round windows all over it. Probably it was of basalt, though weeds draped the greater part; and such was its lonely and impressive place on that far hill that it may have been a temple or a monastery. Some phosphorescent fish

inside it gave the small round windows an aspect of shining, and Carter did not blame the sailors much for their fears. Then by the watery moonlight he noticed an odd high monolith in the middle of that central court, and saw that something was tied to it. And when, after getting a telescope from the captain's cabin, he saw that that bound thing was a sailor in the silk robes of Oriab, head downward and without eyes, he was glad that a rising breeze soon took the ship ahead to more healthy parts of the sea.

The next day they spoke with a ship with violet sails bound for Zar, in the land of forgotten dreams, with bulbs of strange-coloured lilies for cargo. And on the evening of the eleventh day they came in sight of the isle of Oriab with Ngranek rising jagged and snow-crowned in the distance. Oriab is a very great isle, and its port of Baharna a mighty city. The wharves of Baharna are of porphyry, and the city rises in the great stone terraces behind them, having streets that are frequently arched over by buildings and the bridges between buildings. There is a great canal which goes under the whole city in a tunnel with granite gates and leads to the inland lake of Yath, on whose farther shore are the vast clay-brick ruins of a primal city whose name is not remembered. As the ship drew into the harbour at evening the twin beacons Thon and Thal gleamed a welcome, and in all the million windows of Baharna's terraces mellow lights peeped out quietly and gradually as the stars peep out overhead in the dusk, till that steep and climbing seaport became a glittering constellation hung between the stars of heaven and the reflections of those stars in the still harbour.

The captain, after landing, made Carter a guest in his own small house on the shores of Yath where the rear of the town slopes down to it; and his wife and servants brought strange toothsome foods for the traveller's delight. And in the days after that Carter asked for rumors and legends of Ngranek in all the taverns and public places where lava-gatherers and image-makers meet, but could find no one who had been up the higher slopes or even seen the carven face. Ngranek was a hard mountain with only an accursed valley behind it, and besides, one could never depend on the certainty that night-gaunts are altogether fabulous.

When the captain sailed back to Dylath-Leen, Carter took quarters in an ancient tavern opening on an alley of steps in the

original part of the town, which is built of brick and resembles the ruins of Yath's farther shore. Here he laid his plans for the ascent of Ngranek, and correlated all that he had learned from the lava-gatherers about the roads thither. The keeper of the tavern was a very old man, and had heard so many legends that he was a great help. He even took Carter to an upper room in that ancient house and showed him a crude picture which a traveller had scratched on the clay wall in the old days when men were bolder and less reluctant to visit Ngranek's higher slopes. The old tavern-keeper's great-grandfather had heard from his great-grandfather that the traveller who scratched that picture had climbed Ngranek and seen the carven face, here drawing it for others to behold; but Carter had very great doubts, since the large rough features on the wall were hasty and careless, and wholly overshadowed by a crowd of little companion shapes in the worst possible taste, with horns and wings and claws and curling tails.

At last, having gained all the information he was likely to gain in the taverns and public places of Baharna, Carter hired a zebra and set out one morning on the road by Yath's shore for those inland parts wherein towers stony Ngranek. On his right were rolling hills and pleasant orchards and neat little stone farm-houses, and he was much reminded of those fertile fields that flank the Skai. By evening he was near the nameless ancient ruins on Yath's farther shore, and though old lava-gatherers had warned him not to camp there at night, he tethered his zebra to a curious pillar before a crumbling wall and laid his blanket in a sheltered corner beneath some carvings whose meanings none could decipher. Around him he wrapped another blanket, for the nights are cold in Oriab; and when upon awaking once he thought he felt the wings of some insect brushing his face he covered his head altogether and slept in peace till aroused by the magah birds in distant resin groves.

The sun had just come up over the great slope whereon leagues of primal brick foundations and worn walls and occasional cracked pillars and pedestals stretched down desolate to the shore of Yath, and Carter looked about for his tethered zebra. Great was his dismay to see that docile beast stretched prostrate beside the curious pillar to which it had been tied, and still greater was he vexed on finding that the steed was quite dead, with its blood all sucked away through a singular wound in its throat. His pack had been disturbed, and several shiny knickknacks taken

away, and all around on the dust soil were great webbed footprints for which he could not in any way account. The legends and warnings of lava-gatherers occurred to him, and he thought of what had brushed his face in the night. Then he shouldered his pack and strode on toward Ngranek, though not without a shiver when he saw close to him as the highway passed through the ruins a great gaping arch low in the wall of an old temple, with steps leading down into darkness farther than he could peer.

His course now lay uphill through wilder and partly wooded country, and he saw only the huts of charcoal-burners and the camp of those who gathered resin from the groves. The whole air was fragrant with balsam, and all the magah birds sang blithely as they flashed their seven colours in the sun. Near sunset he came on a new camp of lava-gatherers returning with laden sacks from Ngranek's lower slopes; and here he also camped, listening to the songs of the men, and overhearing what they whispered about a companion they had lost. He had climbed high to reach a mass of fine lava above him, and at nightfall did not return to his fellows. When they looked for him the next day they found only his turban, nor was there any sign on the crags below that he had fallen. They did not search any more, because the old men among them said it would be of no use. No one ever found what the night-gaunts took, though those beasts themselves were so uncertain as to be almost fabulous. Carter asked them if night-gaunts sucked blood and liked shiny things and left webbed footprints, but they all shook their heads negatively and seemed frightened at his making such an inquiry. When he saw how taciturn they had become he asked them no more, but went to sleep in his blanket.

The next day he rose with the lava-gatherers and exchanged farewells as they rode west and he rode east on a zebra he had bought from them. Their older men gave him blessings and warnings, and told him he had better not climb too high on Ngranek, but while he thanked them heartily he was in no wise dissuaded. Far still did he feel that he must find the gods on unknown Kadath; and win from them a way to that haunting and marvellous city in the sunset. By noon, after a long uphill ride, he came upon some abandoned brick villages of the hill-people who had once dwelt thus close to Ngranek and carved images from its smooth lava. Here they had dwelt till the days of the old tavern-

keeper's grandfather, but about that time they felt that their presence was disliked. Their homes had crept even up the mountain's slope, and the higher they built the more people they would miss when the sun rose. At last they decided it would be better to leave altogether, since things were sometimes glimpsed in the darkness which no one could interpret favourably; so in the end all of them went down to the sea and dwelt in Baharna, inhabiting a very old quarter and teaching their sons the old art of image-making which to this day they carry on. It was from these children of the exiled hill-people that Carter had heard the best tale about Ngranek when searching through Baharna's ancient taverns.

All this time the great gaunt side of Ngranek was looming up higher and higher as Carter approached it. There were sparse trees on the lower slopes and feeble shrubs above them, and then the bare hideous rock rose spectral into the sky, to mix with frost and ice and eternal snow. Carter could see the rifts and ruggedness of that sombre stone, and did not welcome the prospect of climbing it. In places there were solid streams of lava, and scoriac heaps that littered slopes and ledges. Ninety aeons ago, before even the gods had danced upon its pointed peak, that mountain had spoken fire and roared with the voices of the inner thunders. Now it towered all silent and sinister, bearing on the hidden side that secret titan image whereof rumor told. And there were caves in that mountain, which might be empty and alone with elder darkness, or might—if legend spoke truly—hold horrors of a form not to be surmised.

The ground sloped upward to the foot of Ngranek, thinly covered with shrub oaks and ash trees, and strewn with bits of rock, lava, and ancient cinder. There were the charred embers of many camps, where the lava-gatherers were wont to stop, and several rude altars which they had built either to propitiate the Great Ones or to ward off what they dreamed of in Ngranek's high passes and labyrinthine caves. At evening Carter reached the farthestmost pile of embers and camped for the night, tethering his zebra to a sapling and wrapping himself well in his blanket before going to sleep. And all through the night a voonith howled distantly from the shore of some hidden pool, but Carter felt no fear of that amphibious terror, since he had been told with certainty that not one of them dare even approach the slope of Ngranek.

In the clear sunshine of morning Carter began the long ascent, taking his zebra as far as that useful beast could go, but tying it to a stunted ash tree when the floor of the thin wood became too steep. Thereafter he scrambled up alone; first through the forest with its ruins of old villages in overgrown clearings, and then over the tough grass where anemic shrubs grew here and there. He regretted coming clear of the trees, since the slope was very precipitous and the whole thing rather dizzying. At length he began to discern all the countryside spread out beneath him whenever he looked about; the deserted huts of the image-makers, the groves of resin tree and the camps of those who gathered from them, the woods where prismatic magahs nest and sing, and even a hint very far away of the shores of Yath and of those forbidding ancient ruins whose name is forgotten. He found it best not to look around, and kept on climbing and climbing till the shrubs became very sparse and there was often nothing but the tough grass to cling to.

Then the soil became meagre, with great patches of bare rock cropping out, and now and then a nest of a condor in a crevice. Finally here was nothing at all but the bare rock, and had it not been very rough and weathered, he could scarcely have ascended farther. Knobs, ledges, and pinnacles, however, helped greatly; and it was cheering to see occasionally the sign of some lava-gatherer scratched clumsily in the friable stone, and know that wholesome human creatures had been there before him. After a certain height the presence of man was further shewn by handholds and footholds hewn where they were needed, and by little quarries and excavations where some choice vein or stream of lava had been found. In one place a narrow ledge had been chopped artificially to an especially rich deposit far to the right of the main line of ascent. Once or twice Carter dared to look around, and was almost stunned by the spread of landscape below. All the island betwixt him and the coast lay open to his sight, with Baharna's stone terraces and the smoke of its chimneys mystical in the distance. And beyond that lay the illimitable southern sea with all its curious secrets.

Thus far there had been much winding around the mountain, so that the farther and carven side was still hidden. Carter now saw a ledge running upward and to the left which seemed to head the way he wished, and this course he took in the hope that it might prove continuous. After ten minutes he saw it was indeed

no cul-de-sac, but that it led steeply on in an arch which would, unless suddenly interrupted or deflected, bring him after a few hours' climbing to that unknown southern slope overlooking the desolate crags and the accursed valley of lava. As new country came into view below him he saw that it was bleaker and wilder than those seaward lands he had traversed. The mountain's side, too, was somewhat different; being here pierced by curious cracks and caves not found on the straighter route he had left. Some of these were above him and some beneath him, all opening on sheerly perpendicular cliffs and wholly unreachable by the feet of man. The air was very cold now, but so hard was the climbing that he did not mind it. Only the increasing rarity bothered him, and he thought that perhaps it was this which had turned the heads of other travellers and excited those absurd tales of night-gaunts whereby they explained the loss of such climbers as fell from these perilous paths. He was not much impressed by traveller's tales, but had a good curved scimitar in case of any trouble. All lesser thoughts were lost in the wish to see that carven face which might set him on the track of the gods atop unknown Kadath.

At last, in the wearisome iciness of upper space, he came round fully to the hidden side of Ngranek and saw in infinite gulfs below him the lesser crags and sterile abysses of lava which marked the olden wrath of the Great Ones. There was unfolded, too, a vast expanse of country to the south; but it was a desert land without fair fields or cottage chimneys, and seemed to have no ending. No trace of the sea was visible on this side, for Oriab is a great island. Black caverns and odd crevices were still numerous on the sheer vertical cliffs, but none of them was accessible to a climber. There now loomed aloft a great beetling mass which hampered the upward view, and Carter was for a moment shaken with doubt lest it prove impassable. Poised in windy insecurity miles above earth, with only space and death on one side and slippery walls of rock on the other, he knew for a moment the fear that makes men shun Ngranek's hidden side. He could not turn round, yet the sun was already low. If there were no way aloft, the night would find him crouching there still, and the dawn would not find him at all.

to be continued

BOOKS OF THE QUARTER

TWO NOVELS AND AN ANTHOLOGY

GREENER THAN YOU THINK, by Ward Moore. William Sloane Associates, New York. 358 pages, \$3.50.

ZOTZ!, by Walter Karig. Rinehart and Company, New York. 268 pages, \$2.75.

MAN INTO BEAST: STRANGE TALES OF TRANSFORMATION, edited by A. C. Spector. Doubleday & Company, New York. 368 pages, \$3.75.

New books in the field of the macabre continue to come from publishers, professional and amateur alike. Of them Mr. Moore's **GREENER THAN YOU THINK** is one of the best novels in the genre in many a moon. The theme is that of the earth's destruction or, rather, of the end of civilization, by dint of man's own efforts, not by invasion from a neighboring planet or some similar, usual method. It has rich overtones of satire, and many terrifying scenes which will delight lovers of the horrible.

The story is told by Albert Weener, a door-to-door salesman "with most of the instincts of a roach," to quote the jacket. Albert answers a Help Wanted ad, and finds himself working for Josephine Spenser Francis, "who looked like an unmade bed and had discovered a formula for increasing the fertility and growth of plants." She sends Albert out to demonstrate her formula on somebody's cornfield, but Albert cogently reasons that if it will work on corn, why not grass; so he stops at the run-down lawn of a Mrs. Dinkman in Los Angeles, persuades her to pay ten dollars for the privilege of having her lawn—which grew only Bermuda grass—"rejuvenated". Mrs. Dinkman pays it, Albert sprays it, and the next day there is hell to pay, for nobody can either cut the grass effectively or control its growth—not the lawnmowers, the scythes, the power mowers, the flame-throwers, dynamite, tanks, nothing—and before long Los Angeles is overrun, and thereafter the world. Weener's story is also the story of his own capitalization on the catastrophe; though the grass is contained from time to time, it breaks loose and moves inexorably from one continent to the next, while Albert waxes rich as owner and President of Consolidated Pemmican and Allied Concentrates.

The progress of the grass, the futile efforts of governments to do something about it, Albert Weener's cautious scrambling for more and more wealth, the portraits of life in a great newspaper office, the inevitable catching up of the grass to Albert—all these add up to a first-rate novel in the genre of the unusual and bizarre. **GREENER THAN YOU THINK** must surely rank first among all novels of the *outré* published in 1947. Terror, horror, satire are all of one piece, closely interwoven, excellently done.

On the debit side of the ledger is a picayune but distractingly stupid mannerism which the author affects; quite needlessly he omits apostrophes and runs words together—"afterall", "vacuumcleaners", "backandforth", and so on. This is like a small boy showing off; there is neither need nor excuse for it, and if Mr. Moore insisted on it, then his editors should have edited this nonsense out of the text. **GREENER THAN YOU THINK** is no esoteric communication to the elect *avant garde*, but a story of satire meant to entertain; any distraction in its communication is therefore out of place and violates good writing.

But this is a minor matter; it is an idiosyncrasy which were better omitted; but it does not detract from the excellence of the story even if it does make it a little more difficult to read. It stands head and shoulders above other novels in the genre for 1947, and it can be recommended to all literate readers, with the admonition to heed the author's brief foreword: "Neither the vegetation nor people in this book are (sic) entirely fictitious. But reader . . . you, Sir, Miss, or Madam—whatever your country or station—are Albert Weener."

I wish I could be as enthusiastic about Walter Karig's **ZOTZ!** Alas! I cannot. I cannot find it within my abilities to prevaricate about my reactions to a book. Mr. Karig wrote a very good realistic novel entitled, **LOWER THAN ANGELS**, but this attempt at fantasy and satire which follows it is—well, the best I can say for it is that it is frankly lousy. Yet, and mark this, it has been chosen as a selection of the Book-of-the-Month Club! Perhaps it is to be expected that a Club, which so often has chosen very good books for its readers, should come a cropper once in a while—but why, one asks, must the croppers be such very bad ones? Yet, one reflects that one of its critics recently highly praised a very very bad collection of fantastic tales solely because the publisher was a good friend of his, which seems to us a violation of artistic integrity of which no worthy writer

could be guilty; so in view of that fact perhaps it is not too surprising that such a really bad book as ZOTZ! should be selected as one of the Club's books.

ZOTZ! is the story of a shy professor in a southern theological seminary who accidentally acquires the power of taking life by a digital gesture accompanied by the use of the word, "Zotz!" Naturally, he wants to sell this tremendous weapon to the United States, and he makes for Washington with all speed to offer himself to the government which is even now preparing to use the atomic bomb. And, of course, there he becomes involved in all kinds of bureaucratic red tape, and what is supposed to be hilarious satire results. Mingled with this is a silly love story, and a few illustrations by Mr. Karig himself.

This is all old stuff to readers of fantasy. It is so old that Karig's account of it limps and creaks badly from the beginning. So much for its fantasy. Taking a look at its satire, it is only too manifest that this sort of thing has been done far better too many times to take note of it, and Mr. Karig offers nothing new. Indeed, two recent books, in the same season as ZOTZ!, contain far more effective satire—one is the afore-reviewed GREENER THAN YOU THINK, which might far better have reflected credit upon the judges of the Book-of-the-Month Club by being chosen instead of ZOTZ!, the other is THE INFERNAL MACHINE, by A. Fleming MacLiesh and Robert San Marzano (Houghton-Mifflin, \$2.75). Any fantasy connoisseur who adds ZOTZ! to his shelves is sucker-bait for any kind of imitation.

It is a pleasure to hail an anthology with a new and different idea. Mr. Spector'sky's MAN INTO BEAST is such an anthology; it is a collection of stories woven around the myth of man's metamorphosis from human form into the body of beast or insect or tree. There are stories of men being transformed into termites, cats, cockroaches, trees, fish, and monkeys in this book. In number, the stories are ten, but four of them are nowhere else available. The ten are: *The Adventures of Professor Emmett*, by Ben Hecht; *Green Thoughts*, by John Collier; *Mr. Sycamore*, by Robert Ayre; *Laura*, by Saki; *The Monkey*, by Isak Dinesen; *The King of the Cats*, by Stephen Vincent Benet; *Mr. Limpet*, by Theodore Pratt; *The Cyprian Cat*, by Dorothy Sayers; *Tarnhelm*, by Hugh Walpole; and *Metamorphosis*, by Franz Kafka.

The editor sets forth his criteria in a preface; stories, he maintains, had to have "three qualities whose presence was to be mandatory for inclusion in the book. First, the story must be told with such skill as to disarm and bemuse the reader before a metamorphosis took place, so that his modern, skeptical caution would be in abeyance, and he would be ready and able to 'co-operate,' experiencing what Coleridge called 'a willing suspension of disbelief.' Second, there must be no supernatural explanation of the metamorphosis; it must seem 'natural' and real. Furthermore and by the same reasoning, there were to be no werewolves, dragons, wizards, et cetera. Third, only those stories would be included in which the author, whether his story was humorous and light or darkly portentous, had attempted to do more than merely tell a story, had succeeded, in fact, in imparting a truth about the world and the beasts who walk it, had not been merely instructive in this respect, but illuminating in a way that might be impossible were his story concerned with ordinary human beings." Within these boundaries, Mr. Sectorsky has put together an anthology which can be recommended unreservedly.

FROM THE FAN PRESSES

THE FORBIDDEN GARDEN, by John Taine. Fantasy Press, Reading, Pennsylvania. 278 pages, \$3.00.

VENUS EQUILATERAL, by George O. Smith. Prime Press, Philadelphia. 455 pages, \$3.00.

EDISON'S CONQUEST OF MARS, by Garrett P. Serviss. Carcosa House, Los Angeles. 200 pages, \$3.50.

OF WORLDS BEYOND: THE SCIENCE OF SCIENCE-FICTION WRITING, edited by Lloyd Eshbach. Fantasy Press, Reading, Pennsylvania. 96 pages, \$2.00.

Publications of fan presses continue to appear, many of them badly printed and bound, but at least, in book form. These four are the most recent offerings, and, while they represent different degrees of merit, none is particularly outstanding, though all are of interest to the collector, especially of science-fiction. Of these four books, Mr. Eshbach's little compilation is of the most immediate interest, since it presents various theories about writing science-fiction by the authors who are writing and publishing it—Robert A. Heinlein, John Taine, Jack Williamson, A. E. Van Vogt, L. Sprague de Camp, E. E. Smith, and John W. Campbell,

Jr. Of course, a science-fiction story is written precisely like any other kind of story, and it is doubtful that this little symposium will prove of any practical help to any aspiring writer, but it is no less entertaining and interesting.

Mr. Eshbach introduces each contributor, complete with photograph, and *aficionados* will certainly want the book if for no other reason than these introductory paragraphs, which are as comprehensive as possible within the word-limitations. The ideas expressed by the contributors are variously instructive and amusing. Mr. Campbell, for instance, says earnestly, "For, above all else, a story—science fiction or otherwise—is a story of human beings." But unfortunately most science-fiction stories are about stock or type characters, and not about real human beings at all. Mr. Campbell's article is not nearly so much about the science of science-fiction as it is a partial exposure of Mr. Campbell's role as an editor. But this is by the way; the little book is worth reading, and Mr. Eshbach has done a good job on it, both in content and in format.

The other three books are all stories of adventure with science-fiction accoutrements. John Taine's **THE FORBIDDEN GARDEN** is a story of the search for a shovelful of soil from Central Asia, the searchers after which include among their number the customary adventure-novel requisite in Marjorie Driscutt—"who is beauty and publicity personified." The publishers tell us that Mr. Taine's ingenuity permits him not only to explore the romance which is necessary to his story, but also "to combine such seemingly unrelated ingredients as a gorgeous delphinium, hereditary insanity, black ice, radioactivity, a visitant from cosmic distances and remote ages, seeds of madness, and the strangest garden ever imagined, to produce a tremendous scientific fantasy." However good the entertainment is, **THE FORBIDDEN GARDEN** is run-of-the-mill science fiction, as Mr. Taine undoubtedly meant it to be, since it cannot be ranked with the work of Wells, Stapledon, Bradbury, or Leiber, for instance. It has the virtue of moving swiftly along, and this is shared by the other novels under consideration here.

Possibly the most interesting of the lot is the hitherto "lost" novel by Serviss. For many years this has been in the files of the *New York Evening Journal*, where it ran serially in 1898, doubtless as one aftermath of the popularity of H. G. Wells' *The War of the Worlds*, just previously published in *Cosmo-*

politan. Frederick Shroyer and A. Langley Searles discovered the serial, and Carcosa House now publishes the first book edition of the story. It is an exciting one, a sort of a sequel to the Wells novel, in which Thomas Edison and other world-famous figures respond to the devastation of Earth by Martians by launching an attack on Mars; it is a little quaint, perhaps, in the light of present-day science-fiction, but it is entertaining just the same, and those readers who do not know of it will want to own it. It is not particularly well-written, but the story is told with, on the whole, a commendably simple directness, and the love-story involved is not obtrusive. The publishers have included thirteen full-page drawings patterned after the original illustrations which appeared in the *Journal* a half century ago. The book is introduced by A. Langley Searles, and also contains a biography of Serviss' works compiled by Mrs. Searles. Altogether, EDISON'S CONQUEST OF MARS is a kind of museum piece which science-fiction fans should own.

VENUS EQUILATERAL is a series of connected novelettes and short stories featuring Don Channing in a world of tomorrow, in which he, as a member of interplanetary communications fights big business, crooked politics, lawlessness, technical and man-made problems. These are fast-moving stories, replete with dialogue, distinguished by a greater naturalness than many science-fiction tales, and introduced by John W. Campbell, Jr., in which the well-known editor advances his somewhat untenable thesis that science-fiction is necessarily prophetic fiction, and boldly claims that science-fiction is not fiction, pretending to be science. He says, in fact, that the science-fiction author, predicts "in the same general way" as an astronomer, which, together with his claim that "it took the literally shocking violence of the atomic bomb to make the general public understand the fact that science-fiction is *not* 'pseudo-science'," is wishful thinking of the first order. Mr. Campbell doubtless feels that he is safe in writing such absurdities because science-fiction, like other branches of fantasy, is not being read by the "general public," and he is therefore writing only for a very limited readership of fans who naively agree with what he writes. It is not, however, responsible writing, and books like Mr. Smith's VENUS EQUILATERAL do not need this kind of irresponsible writing to succeed, though the remainder of Mr. Campbell's introduction is innocuous and interesting enough.

This sort of attitude is akin to the claim that most science-fiction stories are "literature", which they are not. One cannot help wondering why all this insistence on "literary worth"? Why not simply admit that the vast majority of these stories are purely entertainment, and that they are not intended to be literature? But no, the proponents of these fictions must insist with all the frenetic clamor of someone with a grave inferiority complex that these products of imaginative minds have a "classic" status, or are "literature", and so on. As a matter of fact, no apology is needed for these fictions; it is an achievement in itself to write entertaining fiction which captivates the imagination of its readers, and it is necessary only to offer these novels and stories as excellent entertainment, which, indeed, many of them are, and to eschew all absurd claims to their being "literature", which at once casts the pallor of doubt not only over the integrity and intelligence of the claimants, but also over the stories in question.

In this connection, I am sorry to see Mr. A. Langley Searles, for many of whose judgments I have a good deal of respect, lending himself to the ranks of these claimants with a kind of anxious naivete which makes it clear at once that, however much his interest may lie in the fields of fantasy, his literary judgments are not always made from a sound literary or critical basis. When he writes in the introduction to *EDISON'S CONQUEST OF MARS* that "critics complain that a fantastic plot is frequently developed at the expense of characterization. To this, one may answer that at times what happens can be more important than the people to whom it happens," one may indeed make this answer, and I regret that Mr. Searles has made it, because it is not an answer at all; it is a piece of jargon which is meaningless in a literary sense, because it does not answer the criticism at all, and his further elucidation is even more ridiculous, since he presumes that the criticism derives "from laying undue stress upon psychology as the only legitimate fibre from which a fictional cloth may be woven." This confusion of "character" in the sense of a multi-dimensional, full-bodied individual who is memorable in his own right and not because of the story in which he appears, with psychology is not only wholly unwarranted, but puerility of the worst possible sort, and I can only suspect that Mr. Searles was doing something else with his right hand when his left wrote this.

All this, however, is a little offside, and does not pertain specifically to the books in question, all of which can be recommended for their values as entertainment and not for literary pretensions, which, happily, their several authors did not and do not make.

THE SHASTA CHECKLIST

THE CHECKLIST OF FANTASTIC LITERATURE, compiled by Everett Bleiler and Melvin Korshak. Shasta Publishers, Chicago. \$6.00.

That a checklist of fantastic literature was long a necessity no one can dispute. It has been especially needed by the so-called "fan" collector, as apart from the bibliophile or scholar, who, being new to the field, is often too ready to take books on the recommendation of someone else who is too eager to sell them and accordingly tends to pass along spurious fantasy. The Bleiler-Korshak CHECKLIST, therefore, has been compiled with this need in mind; it is designed primarily for fan-collectors and their book-dealers, though Everett Bleiler admits that he had another audience in mind as well—"the historian of popular literary trends, the folklorist and psychologist of fantasy."

The material in this compendious CHECKLIST is divided into two principal parts—an author index of books, and a title index. In addition, there is a general introduction by Melvin Korshak, discussing the history of fantasy bibliographies in the past four decades, as well as the history of the CHECKLIST itself. This is followed by a lengthier introduction by Everett Bleiler, and in turn, by acknowledgments (title sources, specific information sources, etc.), associational items, evaluated reference works, and a note on literary sources used in the compilation of the material in this book.

The definition of the book's *raison d'être* serves as an effective buffer to criticism. Since the CHECKLIST is not designed for the scholar except only as incidental, it cannot be criticized for incompleteness, nor can one take issue with the manner of the listings. It is possible to question certain titles, such as the general novels by Sax Rohmer, for instance, which would seem to us to belong properly in the classification of whodunit novels or novels of mystery and suspense, despite the addiction of Dr. Fu Manchu to the "elixir of life," and other impossible drugs, together with man-eating fungi, and grandiose schemes for domi-

nation of the world; but it is manifest that for the purpose of the "fan-collector's" information, these titles might quite properly be regarded as "fantasy" by him, and are included on that basis. Similarly, one might question other titles here and there.

Even so, there are small omissions, but the compilers have frankly stated that such omissions are possible, and that the CHECKLIST was not meant to be a complete compilation of all titles or related titles, a project which would be impossible within the self-imposed boundaries of this venture. One can justifiably question the inclusion of short-story collection titles, when but one fantastic short story appears in the volume; if one such collection is included, then all should be; and since all are not, then the book falls short of its manifest intentions. A case in point is that of A. E. Coppard, sixteen titles of whose are listed to account for 21 stories which come out of seventeen books, and all of which are gathered into FEARFUL PLEASURES.

By and large, however, the CHECKLIST is meant for the "fan-collector," and to him it will prove an extremely helpful guide. Though it should be of some informative interest to the general reader, if not to the scholar, it is particularly recommended for the *aficionado* who is desirous of adding to his library. He may on occasion find himself buying an ordinary mystery novel or an adventure tale, but on the whole the CHECKLIST will be of signal service to him.

— August Derleth

THROUGH A GLASS, DARKLY

DARK CARNIVAL, by Ray Bradbury. Arkham House, Sauk City, Wisconsin. 313 pages, \$3.00.

REVELATIONS IN BLACK, by Carl Jacobi. Arkham House, Sauk City, Wisconsin. 272 pages, \$3.00.

NIGHT'S BLACK AGENTS, by Fritz Leiber, Jr. Arkham House, Sauk City, Wisconsin. ix., 237 pages, \$3.00.

It is more or less of a coincidence that three of America's leading contemporary writers of fantastic fiction—Ray Bradbury, Carl Jacobi, and Fritz Leiber, Jr.—should each publish a first collection of short stories in 1947. But no coincidence, however, long its arm, is responsible for the penning of the titles of these respective books—DARK CARNIVAL, REVELATIONS IN BLACK, and NIGHT'S BLACK AGENTS.

The use of "dark" and "black" in these titles carries a certain significance to this reviewer. Obviously, darkness or blackness, night and mystery, are quite logically associated with the tale of terror or the supernatural. But peculiarly enough, Mr. Bradbury's "dark" has little to do with Mr. Jacobi's "black", which in turn bears slight resemblance to Mr. Leiber's concept of "black".

Mr. Bradbury views the darkness through the eyes of a small boy. Quite consciously he has chosen a youngster as a protagonist in a number of his tales—*The Emissary*, *The Lake*, *Jack-in-the-box*, *Uncle Einar*, *The Night*, *The Man Upstairs*. Darkness is the realm of ghosts and goblins, as in his unusual and effective *Homecoming*. It is also a proper *milieu* for the activities of undertakers—and Bradbury's preoccupation with morticians is apparent in a number of his stories.

But above all, darkness to Bradbury is synonymous with death, and the novella, *The Next in Line*, which concludes his collection, illustrates a combination of the childish dread of darkness and preoccupation with mortuary science, although the story has been carefully stylized so as to make it appear as if told from the "adult perspective". Nevertheless, the corpse-horror is apparent here, as it is in such tales as *Skeleton*, *The Tombstone*, *The Smiling People*, *The Coffin*, *There Was an Old Woman*, and that tribute to necrophilism, *The Cistern*, among others. The theme of the collection is always the childlike fear of death and dying, the indiscriminating dread of non-existent vampires and actual undertakers alike.

Carl Jacobi's concept is, at first glance, the velvet pall, the midnight moor, the unlit house, the *mysterioso* chord on the piano—in a word, the conventional, almost traditional "stage effect" or backdrop for the saga of the supernatural. It is the inevitable background for the mysterious veiled woman in *Revelations in Black*, the genius recently released from the asylum in *The Satanic Piano*, and the diabolical stranger of *The Coach on the Ring*. Yet one cannot dismiss the Jacobi gambit quite this easily. On the surface, his use of "black" is proper to the atmosphere of "manors" and "lodgings" and "laboratories" so familiar to readers of the standard weird tale. But on closer examination of thematic material, one notes the peculiar correspondence of darkness in the background and mental disorder in the characters who emerge from that background.

Sometimes, as in the case of the first two stories noted above, an actual psychotic is presented. In *A Study in Darkness*, another maniac, Corelli, speaks of black and the fear of darkness—"Black has always been synonymous for everything that is evil." In tales featuring a normal narrator or protagonist, there is almost inevitably a moment when, upon being confronted with a supernatural manifestations, the hero fears for his sanity. Another dark thread in the Jacobi pattern is the "demoniac possession" which menaces his characters. It would seem then, that to Carl Jacobi, "black" symbolizes the mental blackout of insanity.

Mr. Leiber has given us a clue as to his concept of blackness by arbitrarily dividing the tales in his collection into two sections, with one tale of transition. His story-groupings are labeled *Modern Horrors* and *Ancient Adventures*. In the first section we find the memorable *Smoke Ghost*—dweller in a world of "dirty sunsets" and "blackish" snow—an inky phantom leaving smudges, black footprints, and grime in its wraithlike wake, a horror that materializes as a shadow suffusing flesh with a smoky hue. Darkness, to Leiber, is an omnipresent blight in the modern world, a compound of industrial smudge hovering like a monstrous pall over a mechanized civilization and giving birth to horrors typical of the new Dark Ages. It is obvious that to Leiber our civilization presents a very dark picture indeed.

The Man Who Never Grew Young, an ingenious tale of transition, exemplifies his recoil from today's reality. But distance lends enchantment. And in the two tales which conclude his book—*The Sunken Land* and the masterful, hitherto unpublished novel, *Adept's Gambit*—one finds darkness assuming a classic glamour. It is a black cloak, worn by swashbuckling adventurers, a black hood veiling the features of warlocks and wizards—black magicians. In modern times the night-sky is an embodiment of evil; but in the blackness of prehistoric dawn, Leiber sees the "self-consistent stars".

So much for the implications behind the perspective of these young writers for all are still comparatively young, in their late twenties or thirties. All three books contain a plethora of good reading in the field; they are strongly recommended to the lover of fantasy, for all three have something unusual to offer. Ray Bradbury's volume is especially designed for the jaded reader who complains in his sophistication that "there is nothing new under the sun"—or the midnight moon. Carl Jacobi's work will

appeal most strongly to the follower of the more orthodox, almost "classical" ghost-story laid in an English or British Colonial setting. Fritz Leiber shows an equal mastery of both the modern variant and the picturesque fantasy; his *Adept's Gambit* is one of the most adept gambits ever realized in the fantastic adventure tale.

Let no one despair that the "good old days" of fantastic fiction are past. As long as writers like Bradbury, Jacobi and Leiber can consistently produce stories of this calibre, the future of the weird tale is far from dark.

—ROBERT BLOCH

A THORNE OFF THE OLD SMITH

THE GRASS IS ALWAYS GREENER, by George Malcolm-Smith. Doubleday & Company, New York. \$2.00.

Ever since the work of the late Thorne Smith attained widespread popularity readers have been plagued with the abortive (and aborted) efforts of imitators. Now comes George Malcolm-Smith (note the hyphen) with THE GRASS IS ALWAYS GREENER, and for the first time the Smith-sonians can hail a logical, or illogical, successor to the extinguished author of SKIN AND BONES, NIGHT LIFE OF THE GODS, et al.

Malcolm-Smith has adopted the stylistic mannerisms quite openly, and he has certainly penned a "typical" Thorne Smith story in this tale of California newspaper reporter Henny Sherman. Sherman, "covering" a Governor's Convention in Philadelphia, goes on a binge and awakens next morning to find himself in another body, belonging, he discovers after a series of weird adventures, to one Baxter Oldershaw, a bank official of Hartford, Connecticut. Mr. Oldershaw in turn now is encased in the body of Henry P. Sherman. There is nothing to do but trade lives. Sherman goes to Hartford and takes over Oldershaw's dusty job, busty secretary, lusty wife, and fusty friends, including a Mr. Commitch, who makes bird-calls. This leads, oddly enough, to horse-smuggling. Eventually Oldershaw and Sherman resume their normal bodies and return to their respective spouses and houses. But in the highly hilarious interim the fantastic *contre-temps* occur.

It is not exactly and entirely Thorne Smithian; the differences lie in viewpoint. Smith's middle-aged heroes usually went through

much attitudinizing anguish before landing in the laps of moral lapses; Malcolm-Smith's hero eagerly and literally embraces every opportunity without qualm or soliloquy. The absolute whackiness which characterized such books as *RAIN IN THE DOORWAY* and *TUNRNABOUT* is lacking, too; the pattern is there, but Malcolm-Smith attempts to make his story "convincing". For this reason, perhaps, he has completely dispensed with any attempt to explain the switching of personalities—the fantasy reader must accept the change-over without asking questions. It is the guess of this reviewer that the average fantasy reader *will* accept this, and probably laugh like hell, too.

—ROBERT BLOCH

THREE ANTHOLOGIES

THE NIGHT SIDE: Masterpieces of the Strange and Terrible, edited by August Derleth. Illustrations by Lee Brown Coye Rinehart & Company, New York. viii., 372 pp., \$3.50.

THE SLEEPING AND THE DEAD: 30 Uncanny Tales, selected by August Derleth. Pellegrini & Cudahy, Chicago 518 pp., \$3.75.

THE FIRESIDE BOOK OF SUSPENSE, selected by Alfred Hitchcock. Simon & Schuster, New York. x., 367 pp., \$3.50.

These three anthologies offer a rich fare for the connoisseur of the weird and terrifying. *THE NIGHT SIDE* is the third in the series begun with *SLEEP NO MORE* and carried on with *WHO KNOCKS?*, and is somewhat less restricted in subject material than these two preceding books which were given over wholly respectively, to horror and the spectral. *THE NIGHT SIDE*'s restrictive subtitle offers more latitude to the compiler than its predecessors, and presumably also its following and concluding title, *STRANGE PORTS OF CALL*, a book of science-fiction stories yet to come. Together with *THE SLEEPING AND THE DEAD*, *THE NIGHT SIDE* offers some very fine and little-known stories by Arthur Machen, Algernon Blackwood, H. P. Lovecraft (represented with *The Dreams in the Witch-House* and *The Colour Out of Space*), Lord Dunsany, H. R. Wakefield, Ray Bradbury, Mackinley Kantor, John Metcalfe, A. E. Copard, Marjorie Bowen, Denys Val Baker, Walter de la Mare, Margery Lawrence, M. R. James, Edith Wharton, Henry S. Whitehead, J. Sheridan Le Fanu, Clark Ashton Smith, Edward Lucas White, and William F. Harvey, as well as lesser-known

writers culled from the pages of *Weird Tales* and similar magazines, devoted to latterday examples of the fantastic story.

The collector who is interested in the less-known pieces of well-known writers will find much to delight him in these two books edited by August Derleth, who is without question the best informed anthologist working in the field of the fantastic today. Just as quickly, the collector of premiere pieces from the older *Weird Tales* will be readily satisfied with Mr. Derleth's selections. For the former there are such hitherto unprinted tales as Arthur Machen's *Out of the Picture* and *The Exalted Omega*, John Metcalfe's *Brenner's Boy* — hitherto published only in a limited edition in London, A. E. Coppard's *Cheese*, and Le Fanu's *The Bully of Chapelizod*, now first published in book form in America. For the latter there are such long-remembered tales as Everil Worrell's *The Canal*, Henry Kuttner's unforgettable *Mimsy Were the Borogoves*, Henry A. Norton's *Sammy Calls a Noobus*, Hazel Heald's *Out of the Eons*, C. M. Eddy's *Deaf, Dumb, and Blind*, Mary Elizabeth Counselman's *The Three Marked Pennies*, and *Seventh Sister*, H. F. Arnold's *The Night Wire*, Nelson Bond's *The Mask of Medusa*, Robert S. Carr's *Spider Bite*, and John Martin Leahy's *In Amundsen's Tent*, among others.

That all the selections for these two books are in the top drawer is a moot point. Certainly there is nothing to distinguish Mr. Carr's *Spider-Bite*, for instance, and many readers may justifiably feel that Mr. Machen's stories are needlessly obscure, however fine they may be. But it is not to be denied that the collector will find his money's worth in these two books, for there can hardly be any question about the overwhelming majority of stories in both *THE NIGHT SIDE* and *THE SLEEPING AND THE DEAD*, for they are notable tales, they offer a highly diverting variety, ranging from such a delightful whimsy as Kantner's *The Moon-Caller* to the memorable horror of Stephen Grendon's *The Extra Passenger*. Mr. Derleth himself is represented not only by brief introductions to the two books, but by a short story, *Glory Hand*.

Mr. Coye's illustrations are not as felicitous in *THE NIGHT SIDE* as in the two previous volumes; indeed, many of them are almost incredibly slap-dash. *THE SLEEPING AND THE DEAD* is not illustrated, and this may be accounted a good thing, in view of Mr. Coye's performance in *THE NIGHT*

SIDE. Primarily, the reader is not interested in illustrations; the content of these two anthologies will more than repay his examination, though it would be difficult to distinguish between them to say that one was superior to the other, for the books appeal to a wide variety of tastes, and it is quite possible to prefer either anthology, on equally legitimate grounds.

Mr. Hitchcock's collection contains 27 stories and an introduction, *The Quality of Suspense*, by the editor. The stories are not primarily supernatural, though many of them are that or of horror, in the tradition of the weird certainly, and what is especially to be recommended about this collection is a quality it shares with August Derleth's two—most of the tales in it are not readily available elsewhere. Familiar to most readers in the genre of fantasy will be certain stories like Robert Bloch's *Yours Truly*, Jack the Ripper, Ex-Private X's *Smee*, Carl Stephenson's *Leiningen Versus the Ants*, Ralph Straus's *The Room on the Fourth Floor*, Ralph Milne Farley's *The House of Ecstasy*, and Lord Dunsany's *Two Bottles of Relish*; but readers are less likely to know Perceval Gibbon's *The Second-Class Passenger*, Graham Greene's *The News in English*, John Dickson Carr's *The Hangman Won't Wait*, John Metcalfe's *The Tunnel* or other tales by T. O. Beachcroft, James M. Cain, W. W. Jacobs, William Irish, Sidney Hershel, and Phyllis Bottome.

Mr. Hitchcock's choice has been skillfully made in each case, affording the reader the maximum variety possible within the limitations imposed by the editor. "It seems to me," he writes in his introduction, "that suspense is the significant element in every story—else what we are dealing with is not a story at all. . . . Suspense is the plot device which makes story telling an art." Certainly the stories in this anthology have been chosen to give point to Mr. Hitchcock's introductory concepts. He has chosen stories in which suspense is accompanied by danger—"danger mysterious and unknown, or if known, then as inexorable or insurmountable a peril as may be imagined. This is the essence of that quality of suspense which has intrigued me in many stories . . . and the yardstick I used in selecting the stories for this volume."

Readers of fantasy and mystery generally will like this volume, which is not essentially very far from the reservation of the fantastic and terrible.

—JOHN HALEY

SHORT NOTICES

THE SCARF, by Robert Bloch.. The Dial Press, New York, \$2.50. A first novel of horror and suspense by a writer well-known in the world of the macabre. This story of Daniel Morley, who lived under a terrible compulsion to murder, is a singularly fine book and a distinguished achievement. "In terms of scientific accuracy and good writing in general, this is a book to be recommended." — Dr. Frederick Werthman, in the *American Journal of Psychotherapy*.

THE AMERICAN IMAGINATION AT WORK: TALL TALES AND FOLK TALES, edited by Ben C. Clough. Alfred A. Knopf, New York. 707 pp., \$6.00. This is a wonderful compilation of folk lore which no *aficionado* will long want to be without. There are in particular several very fine and memorable tales of witchcraft and special providences, of strange deliverances and improbable animals, of murder and sudden death, of the supernatural and of marvels. The book is beautifully bound, jacketed, and printed, and is a treasure for any shelf.

MRS. CANDY AND SATURDAY NIGHT, by Robert Talant. Doubleday & Company, New York. 269 pp., \$2.50. Down at Mrs. Candy's Boarding House in Cairo Street, New Orleans, you are likely to meet Mrs. Candy, a plump widow; Mrs. Petit, the innocent object of her designs; Blanche and Eddie, two lovers, among other tenants, but also deceased Mr. Candy, who not only materializes on demand of his widow, but also sets about to help her get another husband. Thoroughly delightful!

THE ENCHANTED BOOK, edited by Alice Dalgliesh. Illustrated by Concetta Cacciola. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York. \$3.00. These are stories most enjoyed as a child by Mrs. Dalgliesh, all stories of enchantment collected from every corner of the earth. Here are the tales of the Grimms' *Snow White and Rose Red*, and *The Twelve Dancing Princesses*, of Anderson's *The Swineherd*, of Andrew Lang's *Dwarf Long Nose*, and many others in a book which is an ideal gift for the younger lovers of fantasy.

ROCKET SHIP GALILEO, by Robert A. Heinlein. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York. 212 pp., \$2.00 All about three boys who took the first piloted rocket ship trip to the moon with the scientist-uncle of one of them. On the moon they found not moon-people, but some anachronistic Nazis, left over from 1945. This is typical adventure-science-fiction fare, on an adolescent level. For readers of perhaps 14 or 15 and under.

THE FIRST MEN IN THE MOON, by H. G. Wells. Dell Publishing Company, New York. 239 pp., \$.25. An attractive, easy-to-read pocketbook edition of this science-fiction classic. If it proves popular, Dell may issue further science-fiction titles in this compact, handsome format.

WINDWAGON SMITH AND OTHER YARNS, by Wilbur Schramm. Harcourt, Brace and Company, New York. \$3.00. These hilarious tall tales properly belong to the domain of fantasy, and Wilbur Schramm is far above average in skill as a teller of tall tales. You will be taken with The Horse Who Played Third Base for Brooklyn; with Grandpa Hopewell and his flying tractor; with Wilbur the Jeep; Dan Peters, who talked to his locomotive; with Professor Feathers, who believed that people were deadlier than they thought; and with all Dr. Schramm's delightful characters. Joe Krush's appropriate illustrations help to make this book even more attractive. Recommended without reservations, unless you lack a sense of humor.

TWO CAME TO TOWN, by Simeon Strunsky. E. P. Dutton and Company, New York. 219 pp., \$3.00. This allegorical fantasy of "Mr. Thomas" and "Mr. Alexander", who came from "Hyperia" to take a close look at America is rather a vehicle for Mr. Strunsky's convictions about the American scene and the American way of life than an orthodox tale. Its fantasy is gentle and mild, and so is the book.

THE FLAMES, by Olaf Stapledon. Secker & Warburg, London. 84pp., 6/. Mr. Stapledon's new scientific fantasy is again an allegory. The narrator tells the story in the form of a) a long letter from his prophetic friend, Cass, who tells the world that he has made contact with the people of the

flames who wish to live on earth in harmony with men; and b) its epilogue, consisting of a visit to Cass, some conversation with him, and Cass' death in a mysterious fire. This is typical Stapledon fare, superior to most of what passes for science fiction. In reference to the book, the publishers put its allegory precisely when they point the parallel between the story and their influence upon Cass and our own present "difficulty of entering into comradely trust with a mind alien to oneself in tradition and general texture (thought identical in fundamental purpose)," which "is one which disturbs the keenest of contemporary political analysts."

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Recent Arrivals

GHOSTS IN IRISH HOUSES, by James Reynolds. Creative Age Press, Inc. \$12.00.

NOT EXACTLY GHOSTS, by Sir Andrew Caldecott. Longmans, Green and Company. \$2.50.

THE BOOK OF PTATH, by A. E. van Vogt. Fantasy Press. \$3.00.

THE WELL OF THE UNICORN, by George U. Fletcher. William Sloane Associates. \$3.50.

EDITORIAL COMMENTARY

Among magazines in the field of the macabre, none is older than *Weird Tales*, and we salute and congratulate that magazine and its editors on the occasion of its twenty-fifth anniversary. It is no small feat to keep a magazine going for a quarter of a century, for the mortality rate among magazines is extraordinarily high, and it is particularly high in specialized fields. But *Weird Tales* has maintained a strong hold on the imagination of its readers throughout the years, and it has also retained the loyalty of its contributors to an unprecedented degree.

I can remember very well my first sight of *Weird Tales*. It was on a March day of 1923. I had just turned 14 and had gone into the one local drug store in search of the week's issue of *Secret Service*, a seven-cent weekly which featured the clever doings of Old and Young King Brady, detectives, and their assistant, Alice Montgomery. The druggist, an enterprising young fellow just recently come from Chicago and ever willing to increase his small earnings from the sales of magazines, did not have the new issue of *Secret Service*, but, having sized me up, so to speak, he thrust forth a thicker, red, white, and black-covered magazine, saying, "I think you'd like this one." I found myself facing an horrendous scene designed to illustrate *The Whispering Thing*, by Laurie McClintock and Culpeper Chunn, in the April issue of "The Unique Magazine".

Luckily, I had a quarter in my jeans—a rare thing in those days—and I bought the magazine. I took it home and read such wonderful tales as J. Paul Suter's *Beyond the Door*, Harold Ward's *The Bodymaster*, Artemus Calloway's *Jungle Death*, Anthony M. Rud's *A Square of Canvas*, and the tantalizing "conclusion" of *Weird Tales'* first two-part novel, *The Thing of a Thousand Shapes*, by Otis Adelbert Kline. Forthwith I earned another quarter and dispatched it for the first copy of the magazine; I was a convert, and a convert I remained.

Now, in the March, 1948 issue of *Weird Tales*, twenty-five years are signalized. There is a chasm between the first issue and this anniversary issue, but it is not in quality, no matter how much the detractors of the magazine may think it is. For, as a matter of fact, *Weird Tales* has consistently held to a high liter-

ary level; mingled with stories of pure action and cold grue, there have been many tales which have caught the eye of discerning critics and found their way to the anthologies and the lists of best short stories. There are none of the writers represented in the first issue who are left for the twenty-fifth anniversary issue. Of the 27 writers in Volume 1, Number 1, only two remained with the magazine beyond its first two years—Farnsworth Wright and Otis Adelbert Kline—and they are gone. Within the first three years of the magazine new stars arose, and of these, alas! the majority, too, are no longer on this mortal coil—H. P. Lovecraft, the greatest of them all; the Rev. Henry S. Whitehead; Robert E. Howard; Seabury Quinn; and Clark Ashton Smith. I omit mention of myself and Robert Bloch because the two of us came in just after the three year period cited.

It is a testimonial to the loyalty of *Weird Tales'* contributors that from among all those early and steady contributors, all those living today are represented in the anniversary issue of the magazine. Clark Ashton Smith, Seabury Quinn, and even the late H. P. Lovecraft, with a poem not before published in any professional magazine. Moreover, the dean of macabre-story writers, Algernon Blackwood, is represented with *Roman Remains*, the first story from Blackwood's pen since he wrote *The Doll and One Other*, (Arkham House: 1946), almost a decade ago. And there is a new tale from Ray Bradbury, who has become one of a little trio of contributors to the magazine to find his way into the annual collections of best short stories. From the perspective of literary worth, this twenty-fifth anniversary issue exceeds the merit of the now fantastically valuable Volume 1, Number 1.

We are accustomed to hearing from younger readers that "The Unique Magazine" has "deteriorated", and this amuses us because it brings to mind our own days of doubt. Though the aegis of Edwin Baird was relatively short, lasting from March, 1923 to November, 1924, those of us who read *Weird Tales* in the late twenties and early thirties were in the habit of looking back to "the good old days" when Baird edited the magazine. Lo! by the early forties the then young readers of the magazine were lamenting "the good old days" when Farnsworth Wright edited *Weird Tales*, and calling those years the "Golden Age" of the magazine. And I have no doubt that ten years hence, readers of the fifties will be bemoaning the passing of the forties' "Golden Age". What none of us realizes until we pass through

the stage is that, after reading any kind of writing for any length of time, we tend to become more selective and critical, rejecting ten years after many stories we cheerfully accepted in the beginning; and, failing to recognize this evidence of growth in ourselves, we tend to rationalize and say that what we are reading has "deteriorated", and so forth.

Actually, of course *Weird Tales* has maintained a consistent level. Very bad and very good stories have appeared regularly in the magazine; and so have a great many mediocre tales. Yet, the literary average of *Weird Tales* has remained consistently above that of its companion pulps on the newsstands. *Weird Tales* ranked from the beginning with the better-than-average pulp-magazines, and under the editorial guidance of Dorothy McIlwraith and Lamont Buchanan it has not only held to that average but, in many instances, has improved it. This may be anathema to those who are still lamenting the days of Farnsworth Wright, but it is not anathema to those of us who have been with the magazine for more than two decades. Dorothy McIlwraith and Lamont Buchanan would be in extremis before they would reject stories like *The Colour Out of Space*, *The Tomb*, *The Shadow Over Innsmouth*, *At the Mountains of Madness*, and others by H. P. Lovecraft; *The Panelled Room*, by myself; and other, now classic tales, by Clark Ashton Smith, H. S. Whitehead, and other writers—but Farnsworth Wright did reject them, though he later accepted some of them after Lovecraft's death. This is not by way of deprecating Wright, who was a fine friend and a good editor, according to his lights, no, it is by way of clarifying the picture and attempting to bring some order into the myth-patterns held as credo by the worshippers of the "good old days".

We are happy to see the twenty-fifth anniversary issue of *Weird Tales*, and we hope that there will be a fiftieth, and that we will be here to hail it. Long may it wave, and may it continue to have such capable editors as it has been fortunate enough to have throughout its twenty-five years!

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Arkham House patrons may be interested in knowing that the twin-firm of Stanton & Lee has recently embarked on a major project. In addition to last year's publication of *A BOY'S WAY*, by August Derleth and Clare Victor Dwiggin (\$2.00), and this Spring's omnibus, *WISCONSIN EARTH: A SAC*

PRAIRIE SAMPLER, by August Derleth (containing SHADOW OF NIGHT, VILLAGE YEAR: A SAC PRAIRIE JOURNAL, and PLACE OF HAWKS: (\$5.00), it has acquired from Charles Scribner's Sons of New York their entire stock and rights to all of the books by August Derleth published by them. These books are the following—STILL IS THE SUMMER NIGHT, WIND OVER WISCONSIN, SENTENCE DEFERRED, RESTLESS IS THE RIVER, THE NARRACONG RIDDLE, COUNTRY GROWTH, EVENING IN SPRING, BRIGHT JOURNEY, SWEET GENEVIEVE, THE SEVEN WHO WAITED, SHADOW OF NIGHT, MISCHIEF IN THE LANE, NO FUTURE FOR LUANA, and THE SHIELD OF THE VALIANT. Stanton & Lee issued a special catalog in November describing the books and quoting from the reviews; any Arkham House patron who is interested in having a copy of this catalog is invited to write for one gratis. * * * * *

We are in receipt of frequent requests to set forth the number and titles of books of which we are in short supply, and which will soon be either out of print or out of stock. We are accordingly doing so herewith, and we suggest that anyone who is moved to order "short" items will list second choices either from this list or from our general catalog. The majority of the books here listed will be out of print when these copies are sold.

10 Karloff AND THE DARKNESS FALLS, \$2.85 a copy.

20 Shiel THE PURPLE CLOUD, \$1.10 the copy.

12 Derleth H. P. L.: A MEMOIR, \$2.60 the copy.

43 Derleth THE NARRACONG RIDDLE, \$2.00 the copy.

97 Derleth THE SEVEN WHO WAITED, \$2.00 the copy.

92 Derleth WHO KNOCKS? 20 MASTERPIECES OF THE SPECTRAL, \$2.60 the copy.

As long as the supply lasts, patrons may order the two Judge Peck mysteries, THE NARRACONG RIDDLE and THE SEVEN WHO WAITED, for \$3.00 for the two. In addition to these books, it should be noted again that Robert Bloch's THE OPENER OF THE WAY, A. E. Van Vogt's SLAN, and August Derleth's SOMETHING NEAR will soon be out of print also.

The cost of book publishing continues to rise, almost fantastically. Materials and labor have gone up to such an extent that the average workman who puts in his time on a small edition of

a book actually makes more on that book than the author himself does. How long such a situation can be maintained is anybody's guess. First to cease publication, will be the small publisher, of necessity, for he cannot compete in a field where it becomes necessary to sell 10,000 copies of a book before one's expenses are met. Arkham House will carry on, but it is already evident that much of the material we had hoped to bring to our readers in book form will be brought to them in the pages of this magazine instead. * * * * *

The coming months' publishing program includes at least two Arkham House collections: *THE TRAVELLING GRAVE AND OTHER STORIES*, by L. P. Hartley, and *THE FOURTH BOOK OF JORKENS*, by Lord Dunsany. Following these books will be Clark Ashton Smith's *GENIUS LOCI AND OTHER TALES*, Donald Wandrei's *THE WEB OF EASTER ISLAND*, and H. P. Lovecraft's *SOMETHING ABOUT CATS AND OTHER PIECES*. So much for Arkham House. Meanwhile, Pellegrini & Cudahy will publish in March or April August Derleth's *STRANGE PORTS OF CALL: 20 MASTERPIECES OF SCIENCE*, which Arkham House will send to patrons in accordance with orders received. Pellegrini & Cudahy tell us, also, that the previous anthology, *THE SLEEPING AND THE DEAD*, will soon be out of print with them; Arkham House still has copies.

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A long time ago, when we were very young, in those early years when we were making our first tentative explorations into the literature of the weird and strange, we believed that the world of fantasy was a place capable of the utmost wonder, for was it not inhabited by such masters of the macabre as Arthur Machen, Algernon Blackwood, Walter de la Mare, H. P. Lovecraft, M. P. Shiel, Lord Dunsany, Arthur Conan Doyle, and M. R. James?—to say nothing of other younger writers like H. R. Wakefield, who were becoming known in the field.

Actually, of course, that was not really so very long ago, but time moves inexorably from moment to moment and year to year, and the scant years between that time and this have thinned the roster grievously. First to go was the immortal Sherlock Holmes' creator, then M. R. James, then H. P. Lovecraft, and early in 1947 M. P. Shiel passed on. And on December 15th, in Beaconsfield, England, Arthur Machen died at 84.

Many people remember Arthur Machen chiefly as the author of the tale about the bowmen of Mons, which many a charlatan in print and out has since attempted to promote as a genuine happening of the supernatural, which it was not; but those of us who knew his work best will remember him as the author of some of the most beautiful and also many of the most terrible prose fictions in our language. Of its kind, no novel more striking and wonderfully beautiful than his *The Hill of Dreams* has been written; and few writers indeed have reached the intensity of the terrible that he did in his books, *The House of Souls* and *The Three Imposters*.

Arthur Machen was born in 1863, the only child of a clergyman then stationed in Caerleon-on-Usk, Wales. He was a lonely, dreamy child, and his youth was one of privations about which he has written in such books as *Far Off Things*, and *Things Near and Far*. In his early solitude he found time to write and publish a long poem, *Eleusinia* (1881), a Rabelaisian book much prized by aficionados, *The Chronicle of Clemendy* (1888), and *The Anatomy of Tobacco*, (1884), as by "Leolinus Siluriensis". By the time he was 18, he was at work as a clerk in a publishing house in Paddington, but London was a poor substitute for his native Wales, and he was wretched there. He went from office work to teaching, then to free-lance writing, by which he could not support himself, then to translating, writing at the same time *The Hill of Dreams*, which surely merits its own immortality, though it was not published for ten years after he had finished it. At 39, he took to acting, and for several years he toured England with the Benson Shakespearian Repertoire Company; eleven years later, he became a journalist, and for almost ten years he contributed regularly to the *London Evening News*.

Throughout this time he wrote sparingly. In addition to those works already mentioned, he wrote several other collections of stories and short novels — *The Great Return*, *The Bowmen and Other Legends of the War*, *The Terror*, *The Shining Pyramid*, *The Children of the Pool*, *The Cosy Room*, *The Secret Glory*, and *The Green Round*; in non-fiction, he wrote *Dreads and Drolls*, *Notes and Queries*, *Strange Roads*, *Dog and Duck*, *Dr. Stiggins*, *Hieroglyphics*, *The London Adventure*, and a few lesser works. In the past few years Machen wrote nothing,

and for some time preceding his death last December he was in ill health.

None can question Machen's right to a place among the great writers, not alone those in the genre of the macabre. The most recent accounting of Arthur Machen in his later years appeared in *The Atlantic Monthly* for May, 1947, from the pen of the poet, Robert Hillyer; he writes of a picnic with Machen and his family in 1926, and says "In Machen's presence one saw the landscape under the enchanted lights of another age." Less than a decade before, our esteemed contemporary, Vincent Starrett had written of Machen as *A Novelist of Ecstasy and Sin* in the famed *Mirror*, published by William Marion Reedy. Subsequently Mr. Starrett's study was reprinted as a brochure, and in 1923 in a book, *Buried Caesars*.

What Vincent Starrett wrote of Arthur Machen then seems to us even more apropos today. He spoke of him as "one of the most original and excellent minds of England, and the distinction of his style and thought is one of the most unmistakable of contemporaneous literary phenomena." And then, going on to comment on the curious lack of general appreciation for Machen's fine prose, he added:

"The day is coming when a number of serious charges will be laid against us who live in this generation, and some severe questions asked, and the fact that we shall be dead, most of us, when the future fires its broadside, has nothing at all to do with the case. We are going to be asked, post-mortem, why we allowed Ambrose Bierce to vanish from our midst, unnoticed and unsought, after ignoring him shamefully throughout his career; why Stephen Crane, after a few flamboyant reviews, was so quickly forgotten at death; why Richard Middleton was permitted to swallow his poison at Brussels; why W. C. Morrow and Walter Blackburn Harte were in our day known only to the initiated, discriminating few, their fine, golden books merely rare 'items' for the collector. Among other things, posterity is going to demand of us why, when the opportunity was ours, we did not open our hearts to Arthur Machen and name him among the very great."

To this we add a hearty Amen. To point the irony of this great writer's being widely unappreciated, it is only necessary

to say that the news dispatches announcing his death mentioned only that he was the author of the tale about the Bowmen of Mons!

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Having read thus far, you have come to the end of Volume One, Number One of *The Arkham Sampler*. To what extent this issue is successful now lies with its readers, and we suggest that readers let us know their reactions, though we cannot promise to answer or even acknowledge letters, since time is something of which we never have enough. We are as yet undecided about continuing the magazine after its initial year; we would much like to do so, but our decision rests upon the stability of our subscription list. We shall be appreciative, therefore, of suggestions and impressions from our readers.

